

DANCE OPTIONS of CHEAM WORLD AMATEUR ALLSTARS 2024 by Hazel Fletcher

PARLEY FORD AND NATALIE from Utah USA with an AMERICAN SMOOTH VIENNESE WALTZ to "I Have Nothing" by Whitney Houston. Parley and Natalie are multi times American Smooth Champions in the USA formerly as Juniors, then Youths and now twice as Amateurs. Alan and I have enjoyed watching this duo's talent in this style previously at the Dutch Open and I thought it a lovely idea to feature them as part of this fabulous Options Allstars evening to allow many of the audience to witness American Style performances, not often witnessed in the UK. Natalie's lovely soft peach handkerchief skirted style dress with her long dark hair cascading down her back complimented the lyrical dancing. They had lovely posture and a beautiful flow to their movements and a commendable expressive use of feet from both of them. A nice lift to finish, quite enchanting and a lovely cabaret to open the evening with.

MARCO YONGKUN LONG AND VICTORIA JIANI CHENG from China with a CHA CHA to "Sugar Sugar" by Tom Jones. Marco wore a black dinner suit with a pink satin lining to his jacket, bare chested underneath. Victoria was in her trademark black mini dress highlighting her fabulous leg action. They used this occasion to demonstrate their prowess and understanding of good slick base action and body rhythm. Towards the end of the routine Marco approached Victoria from behind and grabbed her dress, slid it down her body to feature a completely different look, now a long black slinky cocktail gown with red and pink sequin circles. In all a lovely confident show.

HARRY LINGHAO KANG AND ANYA ANRAN XING also from China with a QUICKSTEP to "Bei Mir Bist Du Shoen" from The Hot Sardines. Harry ran onto the floor first in a tail suit with top hat and red rose in his lapel looking very smart. Anniya slinked onto the floor from the stage in a long red dress with a huge red feather fan. The number commenced on two stools. As the tempo picked up into some lively Quickstep showing lightness of foot and lyrical musical shaping, moving very easily around the floor. A lift to finish and then they returned to the stool and a kiss!

GIACOMO BALARIN AND ALESSIA ALTIERI from Italy with a RUMBA to "Entre Tus Brazos" by Alejandro Fernandez. Alessia danced on first with Rumba Walks before the music commenced. She was dressed in a beautiful gold metallic dress over a diamanté leotard. Their dancing on this occasion showed the incredible improvement relating to technique, timing and fundamental principles that they have both made in the last year now being rewarded with final placings in all the majors. Alessia is for sure one passionate emotional dancer unafraid of showing that, most appealing.

MARCO SIROCCHI AND DORA KILIN from Italy with a QUICKSTEP to "It Don't mean a Thing" by Club des Belugas. This music encouraged many to clap along. Marco wore black trousers with a fitted shirt and tie. Dora wore a lovely soft pale green and rhinestone dress. They were most musical and light footed. No frills, simply pure quality dancing. There were some refreshing segments of pure swing section movements, so lovely to see, interspersed with traditional modern Quickstep actions.

JOEL LOPEZ AND KRISTINA BESPECHNOVA from Spain with a PASO DOBLE to "Lux Aeterna" by Solar Flare Piano. That then segued into the Epic Orchestral version of "Requiem for a Dream." Joel wore a black long loose Spanish skirt over normal trousers and a fitted polo neck. A passionate number with some good lifts including one stunning high overhead lift where Joel must have been completely blinded by the long skirt of her dress. A well controlled exit with a "Bum spin" - very dramatic.

GLENN-RICHARD BOYCE AND CAROLY JANES from the UK with a FOXTROT to Michael Buble's "You'll Never Find Another Love Like Mine." Both walked on, Caroly in a beautiful Navy blue elegant dress, Glenn in a dark lounge suit. They proved with this demonstration why they are undisputed current Champions, it was pure class and showing the ability to play with the music, absolutely gorgeous.

SALVATORE SINARDI AND ALEXANDRA KONDRASHOVA from Italy with a CHA CHA opening to "El Raton" by Chemo Feliciano. For the last show David Sycamore announced "it is all very glamorous, everything you see on the floor this evening and when you go and watch a competition - but behind that glamour lies an awful lot of blood, sweat and tears at practice; and our next demonstrating couple are going to give you some idea of what happens at practice!" Salvo entered the floor with a towel round his neck and what looked like a vibrating massage machine on his back. Sasha was practicing her basic Rumba centre floor whilst Salvo was off doing stretching exercises. Then a Samba beat is heard. Sasha's voice complained "I thought we were going to start with Cha Cha today" His reply "OK OK!" This was typical Salvo comedy and very entertaining. They had recorded their voices over the music in completely typical practice style heated discussion. Salvo complained "this is too slow Cha Cha!" Then the Ross Mitchell "Love Potion No 9" started for them to actually dance together. A switch to Tom Jones "She's a Lady" and then back to "Love Potion No 9" Salvo's voice is still heard complaining just like an arguing couple at practice, he wanders off, then Sasha joins in "Hello - over here?" The finish after a couple of good minutes of very good Cha Cha choreography and a bucket load of laughs was Sasha dismissing him pushing Salvo backwards, him rolling back onto the floor! It was hilarious and a bit frighteningly realistic! Also the way the various music and their voices had been cut together was most clever.

After a session of general dancing and line dances led by Jodie and Lynn Harman and then Pam McGill the final section of cabaret was for all couples to return with a second dance. This has been the format for this lovely social party evening from the first year that the World Allstars was presented. I think I have only ever missed one! It was so good to witness what I can only describe as 16 most Professional shows from 8 amateur couples!

PARLEY AND NATALIE danced an AMERICAN SMOOTH TANGO to "VivoTango" by Maxime Rodriguez; a passionate violin arrangement that created good atmospherics. They were dressed dramatically all in black originally that suddenly changed for Natalie when Parley pulled at the top of her dress and released another dress of red sequin with chiffon.

Their dancing was so mature in their excellent stylisation belying their youthful age, a superb demonstration of classic American Smooth Tango.

MARCO AND VICTORIA with a RUMBA to "Third Person" by Dirk - a lovely Chinese song. This is a very slow track which tested their excellence at control of timing and balance. They commenced with Closed Hold -including a Reverse Top, Hip Twist, Hip Rock, pure basic. A classic white shirt and black trousers for Marco and Victoria wore a flesh coloured dress. During their number there was a power glitch and the music continued but the lighting was lost momentarily and what was lovely to see was they carried on and many of the audience lit up their phones. They filled the music with sensitivity and fluidity, pure class, quite exquisite.

HARRY AND Anniya with a TANGO to "DiscoRhombus" by The Cautious Arc. They both wore black, velvet and satin to create a combination with the music of quite a dark number. A passionate opening into a classical Tango, fabulous shoulder line, upper body stillness, combined with good staccato action from the legs and feet. The music picked up tempo and they responded with efficient speed of action.

GIACOMO AND ALESSIA with a GYPSY DANCE PASO DOBLE to "Ciudad de Las Ideas" by Vicente Amigo, a very Spanish piece featuring foot taps and hand claps percussively before the guitars and voices joined in. Giacomo looked a little like a Gladiator when he walked on for a solo introduction. Alessia followed. The music crescendoed with speed and ferocity. Their dance was a mix of flamenco and Man/Woman passion and challenge - a Unique version of Paso Doble.

MARCO AND DORA with a VIENNESE WALTZ to "The Impossible Dream" by Luther Vandross. Dora wore a white net and feather light soft creation, Marco wore a sleeveless waistcoat with a white shirt and black tie. This was pure Viennese Waltz with a few lifts, most classical, with lovely Swing and Sway. Again excellent use of feet, not only for power and projection but also for depiction that was most admirable.

JOEL AND KRISTINA with a CHA CHA to "Latin Soul Stew" to Spanglish Fly. Joel placed a seat on the floor, he was dressed in a red suit. He called for Kristina. She then joined him. They continued to work with the chair varying who sat and acting to the song words and instruments. He led her into the New Yorker variation whilst he was sitting and her busy dancing. They then continued into their characteristic Cha Cha, entertaining the most enthusiastic audience.

GLENN AND CAROLY with a WALTZ that commenced to "Klavierkonzert No 23" by Mozart. It sounded almost Gothic, but classical and very quiet. Carly entered first wearing a black dress with a rhinestone overlay to the upper bodice, Glenn was in classic tails often not seen in a show format! They commenced with a unique lift and then performed so many basics figures with effortless powerful floor coverage that did the talking for them. Pure class, quality and stillness was prevalent and it was superb.

SALVO AND SASHA closed the evening with a lovely Rumba to "Grande Amore" (Spanish version) by Il Volo. Salvo entered in an open backed soft shirt, Sasha followed in an asymmetrical black lace and chiffon dress. The emotion of this performance was not only inspired by the fabulous music but possibly also the knowledge that this was to be their last amateur show ever as they joined the Professional ranks at the end of the International Championships the following week. They danced beautifully with sensitivity and real partnership respect and awareness that was a delight to witness.

I wish to applaud and commend the directors of Dance Options - Lynn, Denise, Marion, David and Kenny who with studio manager - Richard Rust continue to provide this wonderful evening of a mix of social and fabulous entertainment year after year and for sure I will always want to attend.

A heartfelt huge Thank-you.

Hazel Fletcher