

AMERICAN *Dancer*

BALLROOM DANCING
OPENING DOORS

WHAT DOES IT TAKE?
Volunteers at Nationals

CN8 CHAMPION
DANCESPORT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF USA DANCE

BEHIND THE SCENES AT NATIONALS



ERIK & RICKIE

PHOTO BY: MARVIN MOORE PHOTOGRAPHY/ WWW.MARVINMOOREPHOTO.COM

BY: ERICA COLVIN

The USA Dance National DanceSport Championships were a melting pot of talent this year in Baltimore. Young and old, rookie and champion alike found themselves on a very competitive dance floor. But Erik Linder and Rickie Taylor, both 7 years old, were full of excitement and smiles after winning the PreTeen I Bronze and Silver Latin and Standard divisions.

AD: What is your next goal?

ERIK: World Champions, that's the next thing right after this.

AD: What do you want to accomplish when you grow up

ERIK AND RICKIE: We want to be 10 Dancers.

AD: Who is your favorite dancer?

RICKIE: Julianne Hough

ERIK: Derek from Dancing With the Stars and my parents.

AD: What do you think makes them great dancers?

ERIK AND RICKIE:

Probably because of practice.

THE FULL SPECTRUM

First-time champions Erik Linder and Rickie Taylor share their future dreams, while seasoned professionals Eugene Katsevman and Maria Manusova reveal some of their secrets to success.

Practice is the right answer! Eugene Katsevman and Maria Manusova, 11-time U.S. Amateur Champions, agree. Eugene and Marie have been dancing together since the summer of 1993 and recently entered the professional arena with great success.

PRACTICE IS THE RIGHT ANSWER!



EUGENE & MARIA

AD: What are your future career goals?

EUGENE AND MARIA: We want to be happy professionally; to enjoy our professional career as much as possible. So far, so good.

AD: How does your practice schedule look?

MARIA: We never had just preparation for competitions. We have always been very consistent. It doesn't matter if a competition is coming up or not coming up; we maintain the same practice schedule.

EUGENE: We based our dancing on our own practicing and instincts.

Maria: You are responsible for your own dancing; it's in your own hands.

AD: What do you do to prepare during the week of a big competition?

EUGENE AND MARIA: We try to rest more. Less work. More sleep. We try to take a day or two off. Drink a lot of water, eat carbohydrates, eat well. Stay mentally sane.

AD: What is your philosophy of dance?

EUGENE: Be passionate about dance. We never placed results as goals — just do the dancing and improve and get better.

MARIA: You must have passion and consistency. In everything you do.

From Erik and Rickie — just beginning their young careers — to Eugene and Maria — entering a professional career with years of success — these USA Dance members have certainly paid the price to establish good dancing habits. As Eugene said, “A lot of improvement and development comes from learning about yourself.” ■

Standard — Fashion

Photos by: Carson Zullinger



Igor Mikushov & Anna Demidova



Taras Savitsky & Liya Podokshik



David Wright & Liva Andreeva



Oskar Wojciechowski & Caroline Holody



Xingmin Lu & Katerina Lu



Daniel Shapiro & Katya Kovalyova

Whether you are a Standard/Smooth competitor or prefer the Latin/Rhythm style, your costume plays a huge part in your success.



Katherine Cornan from Santa Barbara, CA
Photo by: Carson Zullinger

Fashion Today

You have traveled miles and miles, checked in to the hotel, and finally made your way through the crowds and up the elevator. After navigating down the long hallway, you approach the corner around which stand the entrances to the ballroom.

Suddenly your senses are overwhelmed. Bright and beautiful costumes cover the men and women, boys and girls, and vendors' racks that line the hallways. Sequins, rhinestones, zebra stripes, and every color imaginable vie for the attention of all. But what is it that makes a great costume? What is changing in the competitive and exciting ballroom dance costume market?

This April at the USA Dance National Championships held in Baltimore, Md, three major gown vendors were set up and ready to impress the thousands of spectators and competitors who attended the event.

Ken Heron, co-owner of Randall Designs, the company behind *Dancing With the Stars*, revealed the newest spin on fashion. He explained that we are seeing some flexibility in the International Standard fashion, taking design away from the traditional, classical styles; allowing dresses on the dance floor that are a little more open and cut-out. In the American Smooth category, "we are seeing more cut-outs, sequins, rhinestones, and gathered or draped fabrics." He explained that in the Rhythm and Latin style, animal prints look great and are being used more and more in a very high-end way.

Tatiana Noll with Elle Dance Studios, Inc., shared that, "feathers are back!" And with the Latin style, the longer skirts and dresses are in style. They have more movement and look great on the floor.

Representative Martha Hughes from Designs to Shine said, "bright colors are in style, along with animal print and feathers."

But what do the dancers have to say?

Katherine Cornan, a Standard competitor from Santa Barbara, Calif., likes to keep her style more modest and conservative, but elegant. She looks for a gown that stands out and works with her skin tone. She prefers colors like pink, fuchsia, and deep blues and purples.

Gulgun Tezel from Louisville, Ky, also competes in Standard. She tells us that a dress's color should be bright: "It should look good on the dancer and look bright on the dance floor. A dress should also be visible by the audience and the judges. It should flow nicely and be lightweight so the dancer can dance easily."

Whether you are a Standard/Smooth competitor or prefer the Latin/Rhythm style, your costume plays a huge part in your success. So when you are in the market for a great, eye-catching costume, there are a lot of great designers out there to help.

USA Dance has been contacted by several national fashion magazines about ballroom fashion. Watch for upcoming stories! Check out page in this issue to see the Women's Wear Daily article featuring two USA Dance members, or www.wwd.com, April 17 edition.

By Erica Colvin

WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

VOLUNTEERS DONATED HUNDREDS OF HOURS TO MAKE NATIONALS 2008 THE BIGGEST AND BEST EVER.

Think back to the first time you ever saw a ballroom dance competition. Do you remember the music, the colors, the dancers — the magic? For some, it began at an early age. Others were not introduced until much later in their lives.

For David and Connie Taylor from Bridgewater, Virginia, the USA Dance 2008 National DanceSport Championships in Baltimore, Maryland, was the first ballroom competition they had ever seen.

“It’s just something totally different from anything that we have seen before,” Connie said. “Even when you watch it on TV, you can’t get the sense of what it’s really like without being there and being so close.”

It is this wonder and excitement that first inspire so many to contribute to ballroom dancing by volunteering. Ily Zislin and Elena Granovsky, for example, were the volunteer coordinators at the 2008 Baltimore Nationals. They were in charge of assigning jobs to more than 100 volunteers, not to mention coordinating anywhere from four to 72 hours of work for each individual volunteer.

Why do they do it? Why do people donate so much precious time? Granovsky admits that it’s for a good cause, and she “loves seeing other people being able to enjoy dancing.”

Zislin said, “It’s seeing a ballroom on a Saturday night full of about 1,300 people and realizing that, without the hundreds of volunteers that we have had, it wouldn’t be possible.”

Laura La Gassa, the competition’s on-site registrar, said her job of handling everything to get the competitor on the floor is worth it all in one moment:

“To have someone come out of the ballroom and say, ‘I just danced the best round ever,’ or ‘We finally made the final,’ whenever they have their little triumph, no matter what it is — a lot of times they need someone to tell, and they usually tell me because I am sitting right there. And it just makes me so happy. And it makes me feel like, ‘Wow, all this hard work made all this possible, so this person could have this incredible moment.’”

Ava Kaye Brennen, the Nationals registrar and



scrutineer, said, “Our number one purpose is to make it work for the competitors ... I really enjoy trying to make this all work better.”

Every volunteer and official loved dancing first. It all started as an obsession for dancing and then each took the initiative to make dancing better for others. If you are wondering how to get involved, don't wait around for the next National Championships to start. You can begin making a difference today, right now, in your local chapter.

As Daphna Locker, chairperson on the National Organizing Committee, put it, “It's the whole process that makes it all worthwhile.”

We would like to thank all the many dedicated volunteers that made the 2008 USA Dance National DanceSport Championships the largest and best competition yet. Thank you.

To learn more check out www.usadancenationals.org, or if you would like to volunteer, please contact our volunteer coordinator, Ily Zislin, at volunteer@usadancenationals.org. ■

By: Erica Colvin

“...without the hundreds of volunteers that we have had, it wouldn't be possible.”

ILY ZISLIN

USA DANCE 2009
National
DANCESPORT CHAMPIONSHIPS

RETURN TO *Baltimore* APRIL 3, 4, 5



Renaissance Harborplace Hotel
PLEASE VISIT: WWW.USADANCE.ORG
Mark your Calendars! *Details to be announced soon.*