

Your Mama DON'T DANCE

...OR DOES SHE?

USA DANCE MOM MAKES IT TO THE FINAL SHOW COMPETING WITH HER SON ON THE LIFETIME TELEVISION PROGRAM "YOUR MAMA DON'T DANCE."

BY: ERICA COLVIN

Carol Uphoff of Chapel Hill, North Carolina got the surprise of her life when the Lifetime network let her in on a secret. Her son, Erick, had been auditioning for a spot on a reality dance show; the only thing he didn't know was that his dance partner would be his own mother.

Experience

Erick (21) started dancing at the early age of nine. He attended the ballet "The Nutcracker" and saw that many of the gentlemen's roles were played by girls. He said, "I can do that." By the next December, Erick played the role of The Nutcracker. Erick's career progressed through high school as he continuing working his way up the ladder of success. After graduation he moved to L.A. to continue dancing.

Carol (45), a member of USA Dance NC-Triangle Chapter #6030, had limited dance experience. She explains that she and her husband, Kurt, were cast as the parents in "The Nutcracker" and were able to dance on the same stage as Erick. "It gave me good performance experience," said Carol. She also enjoys dancing socially with her local chapter.

The Twist

But this dance experience was nothing compared to what was coming. November of 2007 the Lifetime network called Carol and Kurt, and announced that Erick was a finalist in the auditions. They wanted

some background material for the show including a videotape of Carol and husband, Kurt. "It was my casting video and I didn't know it," said Carol.

Carol soon discovered that Erick's audition was her audition too. Erick's mystery partner was going to be none other than his own mother..



"Your Mama Don't Dance"

consisted of five female competitors dancing with their fathers and five male competitors dancing with their mothers, with a grand prize of \$100,000. Hosted by Ian Ziering, the show premiered Feb. 29 and took place each Friday at 9 p.m. et/pt.

The Big Moment

"Erick found out on Dec. 12 that he would be on the show. He thought he would be set up against his peers. We acted surprised. I was most worried that our reactions wouldn't be as



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enthusiastic as they should be because he was telling us stuff we already knew,” Carol shared. “It was so hard to keep the secret.”

In the first show, the kids were brought on stage one by one to meet the judges. At that moment the curtain was raised to reveal the contestant’s parent.

“I was shocked. I thought they were playing a big joke on me. I had no idea. They kept it such a secret,” said Erick.

Rehearsals

“We started right off the bat,” said Carol. The show selected the genre and the songs for each week. The contestants would pull a CD out of a hat to decide who would compete which style. Erick and Carol would spend hours learning from a choreographer, and then left to themselves to practice together.

“I was feeling pretty confident; [my mom] is in great shape... I was excited to see what she could. She ended up blowing me away.”

“The great thing was to see him as an adult in his world: seeing him teach and how he worked with choreographer to learn his steps,” said Carol. “We had common goals that we were working on together and achieving. It made it a really enjoyable experience.”

“It was an amazing experience I think it challenged both of us, physically, spiritually, it was hard at times but we faced them together... He encouraged me to do the hard stuff, he had confidence in me, it pushed me

in ways I couldn’t have had any other way... We could just celebrate the experience and our relationship with each other, going after a common goal,” said Carol.

The Show

The first episode consisted of the dads and daughters, alternating with the next week’s competition featuring the moms and sons. The fifth episode through the eighth episode included everyone that remained on the show. Each week, after the judging, two couples were placed in the bottom of the bracket. It then became America’s job to save their favorite couple.

Erick and Carol found themselves as a bottom couple in Week 7; with stunning performances and great scores from the judges keeping them at the top of the game, until now. After a hard week of rehearsals, Erick and Carol awaited the voter’s decision. Much to their excitement, America saved them for the final episode and their last competitive dance together!

At the end of the final episode, Dad and daughter duo Noelle and Doug, were announced as the winners with just a 20 minute window for America to vote for their favorites. “We were very pleased to have made it so far,” said Carol.

“Being on stage was the most surreal moment. It’s tough to even explain...I couldn’t be anything but honored to be there sharing that experience with her,” said Erick. ■

To view clips from the series, visit www.lifetimev.com.