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Mambo Nights will feature Michael Jackson tribute::



By René Hill

It has glamour, sexiness, emotions and energy and it's popularity is growing and growing.

With TV shows such as 'Dancing With The Stars', 'So You Think You Can Dance', 'Dance Your A— Off', all showcasing it, Salsa has become a huge hit on the dance floor.

And Bermuda is no different, according to BermudaSalsa.com director Travis Gilbert and assistant director of the Sabor Dance School Teresa Whitter.

Miss Whitter said: "People are attracted to the glamour, sexiness and energy of Latin dance.

"Once they step into one of our classes, they find it to be more than just dance, it's a stress-reliever, it's easy, a great way to socialise, it encompasses people from all backgrounds, and provides an outlet for personal expression and a relatively inexpensive night out."

She added: "It's so rewarding to see how Latin dance has grown in Bermuda in the past five to six years, and not only with just Salsa: we're seeing an explosion in Tango, Cha Cha, Bachata and even Latin Ballroom."

Salsa is a dance for Salsa music created by Spanish-speaking people from the Caribbean. Salsa dancing mixes African and European dance influences through the music and dance fusions that are the roots of Salsa.

It is normally a partner dance, although there are recognised solo forms, line dancing (suelta), and Rueda de Casino where groups of couples exchange partners in a circle. Salsa can be improvised or performed with a set routine.

The name 'Salsa' is the Spanish word for sauce, connoting (in American Spanish) a spicy flavour. Salsa also suggests a 'mixture' of ingredients.

On the dance floor it is synonymous with high emotions, energy and sexy movements and Mr. Gilbert believes the dance has taken off because it taps into those emotions.

"It is like when you hear something funny you laugh, when you hear good music your body begins to move and when you are in a community of people who are responding that way your soul smiles," he said.

Mr. Gilbert said although the dance is total fun, it's health benefits do not go unnoticed.

"Dance is of course an amazing exercise and it elevates the body as well as the mind," he said.

"People sometimes arrive on the doorstep of the Sabor Dance School with troubles and find release from the everyday. People shed those extra pounds without knowing that they are putting in the effort. With this you will create a space that will mirror the inner lining of your soul and I think that we have been very successful in doing that within the vibrant Latin dance community here in Bermuda."

Every year the BermudaSalsa.com Group, through its production company SalsaMania Productions, stages Broadway-style Latin dance and music showcase at the Fairmont Southampton Princess.

Its six-day August Mambo Nights Showcase 'Unity of Latin Dance' features Latin dance, workshops and Mambo Nights.

It started last night and continues until Monday and features two Latin dance showcases at the Fairmont Southampton's Mid Ocean Amphitheatre.

"The team that makes this event happen has been working tirelessly over the past eight years to create an entertainment platform built on a solid foundation of quality, integrity and a shared passion for Latin entertainment," said Mr. Gilbert.

"This year we will be showcasing a variety of Latin dances including Salsa, Latin Hustle, Latin Ballet, Latin Ballroom, Argentine Tango, Cuban Rueda, Ladies Salsa Styling, Cha Cha, jaw dropping magic and a phenomenal tribute to Michael Jackson the undisputed 'King of Pop'."

There is a mix of both international and local performers and dance instructors, but the internationals are mainly coming from Canada and the US.

"Comomango, of Montreal, is one, Jason Colacino, from Dance New York, Sabor Dance School both the youth dancers and the adults, Latin Energy, of Toronto, City Dance Corps, also from Toronto, Saltimambo, a Montreal dance company, iFreestyle Dance Company, of Toronto," said Mr. Gilbert.

"In addition there is the Cultural Explosion Dance Company, coming from New Jersey, Masacote Entertainment, from Boston, partners Anya and Christian and Jason Colacino, all of Dance New York, Gordon Neil, of Atlanta, and Julissa Cruz, of Virginia. "The Miro Magliore Dance Company of New York is also on the line-up with Sea Breeze Salsa Kids and Adults among others too many to mention."

For tickets to August Mambo Nights visit www.bdatix.com or

www.bermudasalsa.com for tickets and a full itinerary of events.
