

Article published September 8. 2010 01:52AM

Talented tango dancers strut their stuff::

Review by Robyn Skinner

I've been to Argentina. I've seen the dancing in the streets of Buenos Aires, tango's birthplace. On Saturday I was at the next best thing – Bermuda's first Argentine Tango Festival.

Held at the Hamilton Princess, the 'Professional Tango Showcase', was the main event in a weekend filled with dance workshops, performances and milongas (tango social dancing). I wish I had signed up for the workshops. More than one person I spoke to on Saturday said their feet were hurting from dancing all day, but they loved it.

Helping those who had put their feet through the workshops, Travis Gilbert and Marshall Weller were the entertaining MC's keeping the crowd amused and informed about tango for the night (did you know it began in the working-class port neighbourhood in Buenos Aires?). The busy MC's were also dancers, but they were not the only ones multi-tasking. Their tango/salsa partners Teresa Whitter, an amazing dancer with no formal training, and Angela Gilbert, co-founder of the Sabor Dance school, worked the dance floor and the lighting.

It was the partnership on the dance floor between salsa and tango performed by these four Bermudians that truly stole the show for me. Titled 'Mi Buenos Aires' the premise was catching a train. The result was two stories. Mr. Gilbert and Ms Gilbert were the loving couple happy to see each other, while Mr. Weller had clearly upset Ms Whitter (all in the name of the dance). The four commanded the respect of the entire room and gave me goosebumps as they artfully dodged each other while melding the salsa and tango together.

Also commanding the enthusiastic clapping and awe of the crowd was Leslie Shane, who co-produced the evening and studied in Argentina and was one of the principle dancers in the Boston dance company 'Solo Tango'. She danced the traditional Tango to Poema with Angel Coria, who is internationally recognised for his main role as a dancer in the Oscar nominated film 'Tango', by Carlos Saura.

The pairing was perfect. So was the level of talent on our shores. Starting the show with an energy that continued through the evening, Eduardo Saucedo, a master teacher and international performer, and Marisa Quiroga, a classically trained ballet dancer and member of the Colon Theatre Ballet Company in Buenos Aires, stunned the audience.

I wasn't quite sure what the evening would hold, but their traditional tango was filled with the strict foot movements and intense body movements that dispelled any concerns.

Not one foot seemed out of place all evening and nor did any detail. The performers changed their clothing for every song and pairs would subtly match their outfits to each other.

It was, perhaps, a small detail, but one that caught my attention and further enhanced the show for me. The show that was a production of SalsaMania Productions, with support from the Bermuda Department of Tourism.

And a show which sadly came to an end far too quickly but on yet another great note with the enthusiastic performance of Libertango by Miriam Larici and Leonardo Barrionuevo, who have been dancing together since 2008 and achieved a Gold in NBC's 'Superstars of Dance'. Everything moved so quickly from the feet to the evening and was a wonderful night that was the first, but definitely should not be the last Tango Festival in Bermuda.