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Salsa spectacle proves Bermuda is up to global standards

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"That **salsa** thing got pretty big, huh?"

The aging theatre caretaker got it spot on at Saturday's Mambo Nights show as he described the rapid explosion of **salsa** across the world.

And one place that certainly hasn't been left off the **salsa** map is little old Bermuda. Don't let the island's small size deceive you when it comes to the skill and talent of our dancers.

They are up there with the rest of the globe and proved it perfectly appearing on stage alongside top international dance schools.

Mambo Nights has been going strong for six years and the glitz and glamour of the annual dance showcase never tires.

SalsaMania Productions need to be complimented for coming back each year with a dancing spectacle that gets bigger and better. There's a huge amount of work involved, but the dedicated team always pull it off.

This year's show called Latin Beat: The Evolution of Mambo, took the audience on a journey of **salsa** from its cultural roots to its modern fusions.

The history of the dance was revealed through four acts kicking off with the forbidden dance with its "roots going way back to Africa."

Then we were transported to Cuba and Argentina for the glory days of Mambo to see how "music brings us together as we speak the language of dance."

Then the show's second half showed us how Broadway pushed **salsa** into the public eye and looked at the different modern styles of music and dance.

Local actor Robert Godfrey did a great job of linking the acts together as a retiring caretaker of a theatre closing down after many years of presenting Latin entertainment. He added a touch of comedy to the show while proving he still had it, even after two knee and hip replacements.

The lovable old fella even had time to tell us how he got so dizzy watching his first wife dance, that he looked away and saw his second wife.

Mambo Nights was a hot, fun and highly energetic show with plenty of flirty moves. The dancing and showmanship did a great job of making jealous people with two left feet wondering where they can learn to move like that.



Mambo Nights brought glitz and glamour to the island on Saturday night.

The carefully choreographed moves were a sweaty, calorie-burning affair, and that was half the fun. This was **salsa** at its very best as all the performances were rock-solid and unique.

It was like the dancers were having sex with their clothes on as they upped the temperature in a seriously sexy and seductive show.

Dancers from Canada and America included Latin Energy, City Dance Corps, Dance New York, Cultural Explosion, Saltimambo and Comomango.

The dancing was impeccable with plenty of heart-stopping lifts and twirls to make you dizzy. Every step was perfect and the movements stunning. Then there was the sizzling barely-there costume combinations from hot pants to thigh-splitting dresses.

Dance New York, who are regular visitors to these shores, were on top form with their flawless moves. Mouths dropped as one female dancer moved around freely in a black figure-hugging dress strategically held together in the fewest of places.

Comomango brought a modern touch to the stage as one little tug turned all the women's black leotards into orange dresses. And Saltimambo looked like they were having so much fun on stage as they introduced us to all-dancing 'scarecrow' complete with hat, waistcoat, checked shirt, patched pants and a few strands of hay.

The local acts definitely stepped it up a notch or two this year and they were on a par with the international acts. For Mambo Nights regulars, it was great to see how individual dancers had progressed and improved over time.

It's always great to see Bermuda's two supposedly rival dance schools, Sabor and Sea Breeze, coming together to share their love of **salsa**.

Sea Breeze put in a great group effort, including a group of child dancers, and newly weds Travis and Angela Gilbert, the popular Sabor instructors, got the much-deserved biggest cheer of the night.

There was also a great use of two giant screens either side of the stage, which showed popular clips of **salsa** in movies through the years. The crowd particularly loved being treated to a glimpse of Patrick Swayze in Dirty Dancing.

There were a couple of embarrassing sound glitches where the music simply stopped but the show continued. There was no stopping, laughing or even cursing, the dancers simply continued to glide across the stage. If you had any doubt about how good these dancers were, their professionalism at these unfortunate points proved that they were a real class act.

All in all it was a great show that proved the power of **salsa** as a universal style of music and dance. Everything that's good about **salsa** was out in full force. And if Mambo Nights is anything to go by, watch out because **salsa** is infectious.