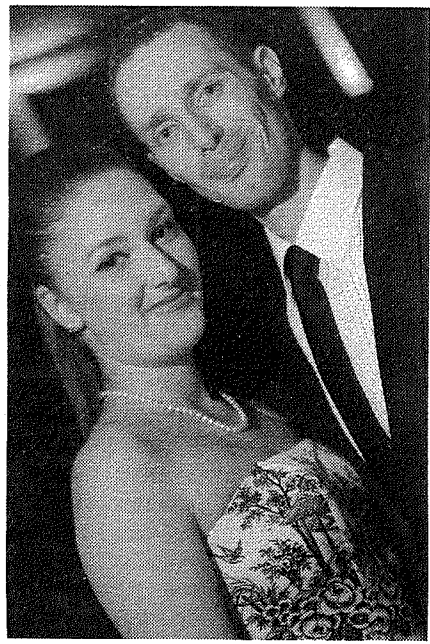


Dance Legends Lights Up Manhattan

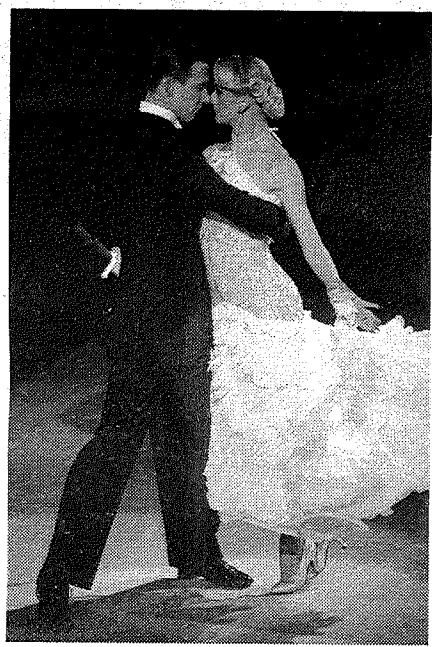
Report by Taliat Tarsinov

Bryan & Carmen. Michael & Joanna. Arunas & Katusha. Giampiero & Caterina. Riccardo & Yulia. Maurizio & Andra. Victor & Anastasia. Sergey & Melia. Domenico & Gioia. Victor & Hanna.



Ily & Elena Zislin
Photo by Stephen Marino

The performing cast of Dance Legends, held in the heart of Manhattan on April 13 and 14, 2012, read like the who's who of the international ballroom community. In the first-ever event of its kind, Dance Legends brought together the world's best current and former Ballroom and Latin couples to perform dozens of show dances over the course of the weekend.



Arunas Bizokas & Katusha Demidova
Photo by Alex Rowan

According to organizers Ily and Elena Zislin, the purpose of Dance Legends was to "showcase what ballroom is all about: the energy, the passion, and the glamour." For them, "New York City is really the center of the world, and now with the Standard World Champions [Arunas Bizokas and Katusha Demidova], Latin World Champions [Riccardo Cocchi and Yulia Zagoruychenko], and 10-Dance World



Ily & Elena Zislin, Taliat Tarsinov, and some "Dance Legends"
Photo by Tony Eng

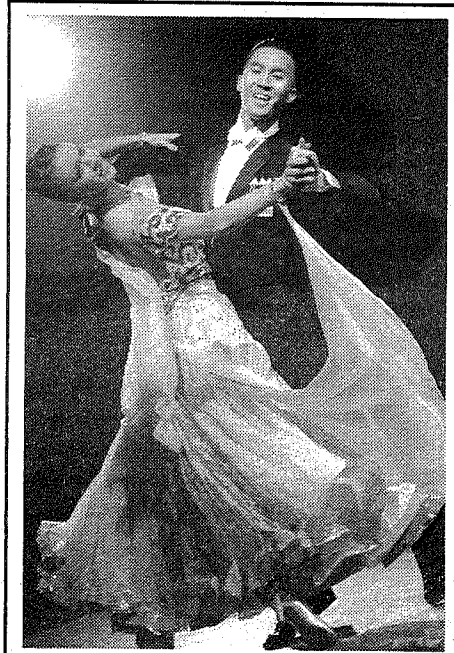
Champions [Nikolai Pilipenchuk and Natalia Skorikova] all coming from the United States, it seems very appropriate to have the inaugural Dance Legends show take place here."

And true to their word, the Zislins could not have picked a more central location. The century-old, historic Hammerstein Ballroom on 34th Street and 8th Avenue, with 75-foot ceilings and a 12,000 square feet interior, was transformed into a breathtaking dancehall for the occasion, complete with a proper wooden dance floor and theater-like seating with over 2,000 spectators, that some described as "mini-Blackpool."



Gary McDonald
Photo by Stephen Marino

The glamour and elegance of ballroom dance was on full display as doors opened on Friday night. Vendors crowded the lobby throughout the weekend with glittering displays of gowns, shoes, and jewelry. Spectators were dressed in their finest evening gowns and tuxedos. VIPs milled around the lobby with cocktails in hand and Souvenir Programs under their arms. Several



Victor Fung & Anastasia Muravyeva
Photo by Stephen Marino

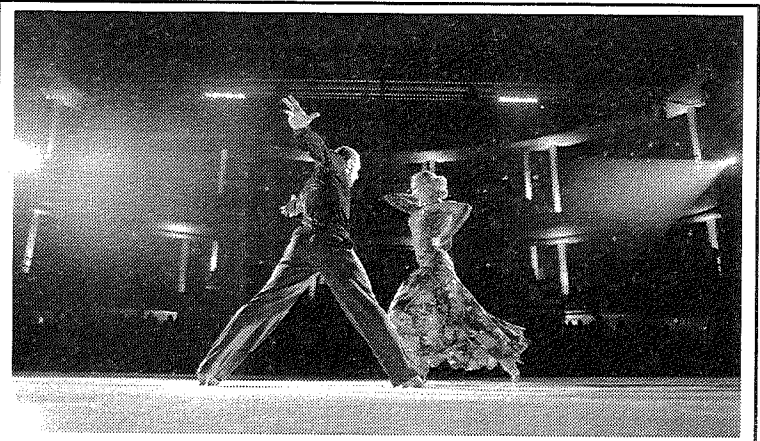
dance world celebrities were spotted, including Brian & Kristi McDonald, Allan Tornsberg & Vibeke Toft, Edward Simon, Goran Nordin, Beata Onefater, and former world Standard finalists Anna Mikhed and Ieva Pauksena.

As spectators entered the ballroom, they were welcomed by a red carpet Dance Legends photo area equipped

with glamorous lighting. Along each side of the red carpet were life-size posters of all the Dance Legends performers, and many spectators stopped to take pictures with friends and coaches.

The production element of the Dance Legends show was given special attention, differing greatly from a typical dancesport competition and creating what performer Giampiero Giannico called a "magic dance floor." Lights were used to reflect the character of each dance. Some show numbers kept it simple with spotlights and solid colors, while others chose more elaborate spotlights, moving around the floor with various moving patterns.

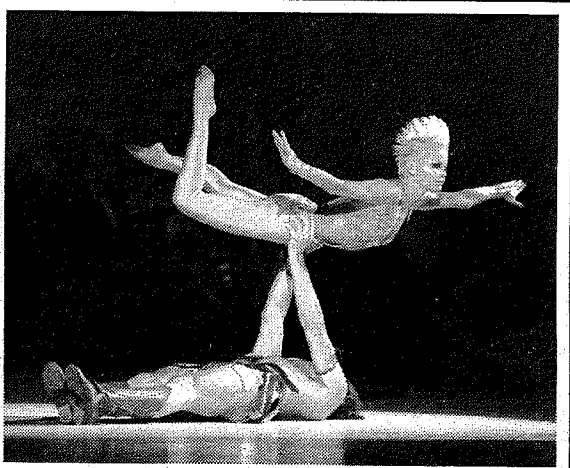
Friday night was opened by the dynamic dancing duo, Michael Malitowski & Joanna Leunis, who danced their interpretation of the Cha Cha. The performance was an outstanding example of champion dancing. Their dance set a high bar for the rest of the evening through its mastery



Riccardo Cocchi & Yulia Zagoruychenko
Photo by Alex Rowan

of audience captivation, creative and unique choreography, and their exquisite professional performance skills.

Victor Fung and Anastasia Muravyeva presented some very memorable International Standard numbers. They are exceptional representatives for the United States and they are one of the best couples in the world, with many fans in New York City to show for it. Every dance was met



Victor Da Silva & Hanna Karttunen
Photo by Alex Rowan

with enthusiastic ovations from the audience. When they danced the Tango, the magic exuded from the dance caused a burst of energy from the audience that can only be described as unforgettable.

Very special guests Victor Da Silva & Hanna Karttunen displayed

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Dance Legends contd.

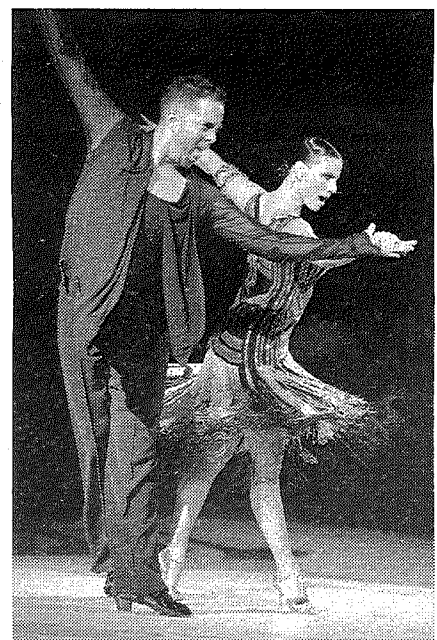
the best quality of the Theatre Arts. The sensuality and beauty exhibited by this couple were fully appreciated by the audience - marked by the stark silence that filled the theatre following each of their performances.

Despite having a relatively new partnership, Maurizio Vescovo & Andra Vaidilaite have successfully placed themselves in the group of leaders in Latin American dancing. They brought a fresh perspective while maintaining the organic way of dancing and fully expressing the character of each dance.



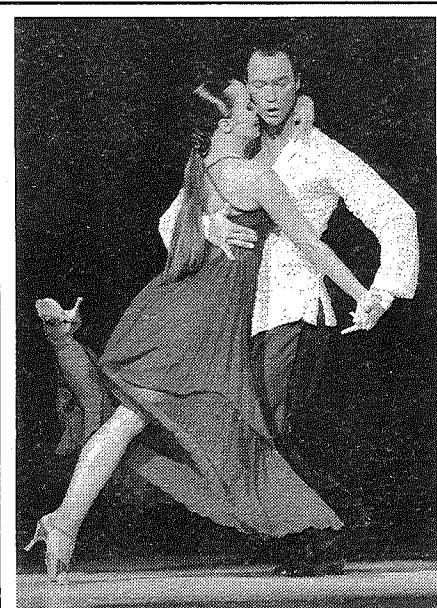
Maurizio Vescovo & Andra Vaidilaite
Photo by Stephen Marino

United States and World Champions Arunas Bizokas & Katusha Demidova artfully demonstrated their proven perfection of the ballroom technique on Friday evening. Seeing these two people move with such an amazing display of synchronization and finesse was simply mesmerizing.



Bryan Watson & Carmen
Photo by Alex Rowan

The biggest excitement of Friday evening came from the invitation given to legends of the past, Bryan Watson & Carmen, to dance their last show ever in New York City. Hailed as brilliant champions, this couple has commanded



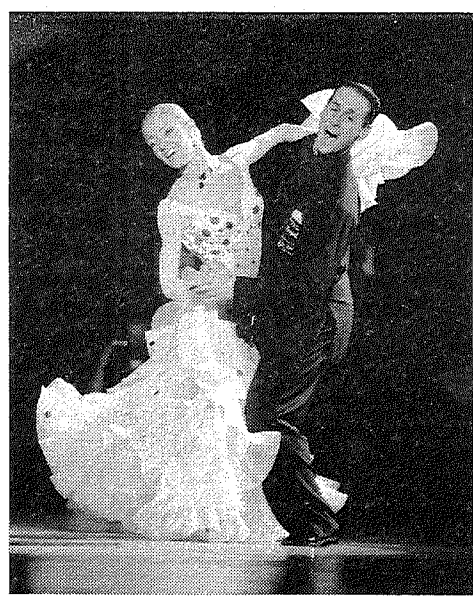
Sergey Surkov & Melia
Photo by Alex Rowan

attention time and again, making the world stand up and cheer them on in every dance. They may have been a little nervous to do it again for one final time, but from their first step onto the dance floor to their final one, they affirmed why they reigned as champions in their time. Respect, love, and admiration emanated from everyone in the theatre.

After Friday night's amazing display of each couples' unbelievable talent,

it was hard to imagine anything else topping it. But then Saturday night came and brought more wonderment and new stars to the floor.

Sergey Surkov & Melia, displaying the most



Domenico Soale & Gioia Cerasoli
Photo by Alex Rowan

dancing, captivating and charming the audience through every step.

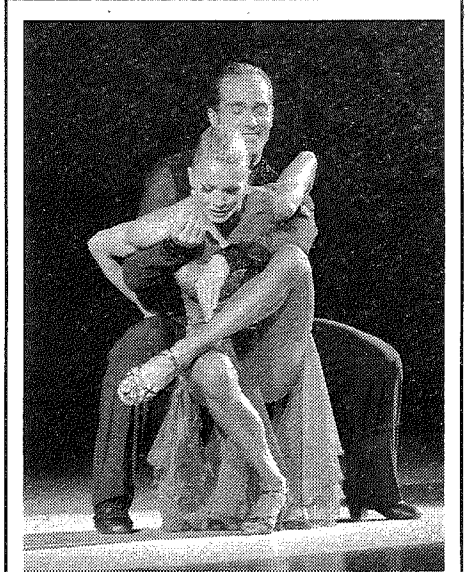
Definitive favorites of the audience, Riccardo Cocchi & Yulia Zagoruychenko, gave 100%

dramatic showmanship of the day, exhibited drama, tragedy, and comedy; they continued to bring an element of surprise to each of their show dances using clever concepts and ideas, expressive choreography, and musicality.

New Yorkers were very glad to see the return of Domenico Soale & Gioia Cerasoli. These individuals have their own unique recognizable voice in the ballroom dancing world; it can only be described as elegant, fragile, and effortless. They showed outstanding

of themselves each time they performed. As natives of New York City, they hoped to dazzle the place they call home, and their energy was increased tenfold as a result. Their outstanding performances were ingrained in every spectator's mind as they left the theater

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Riccardo Cocchi & Yulia Zagoruychenko
Photo by Alex Rowan

Dance Legends contd.

that evening. The perfection of their dancing leaves one wondering how it is possible to simultaneously pull off so much grace and dynamic power. Another intrigue of the evening came from the unexpected collaboration of Giampiero Giannico & Caterina Arzenton. These two past champions have never danced together before, and the new partnership kept the audience at the edge of their seats. It is hard to

come across two individuals who can merge together to become an amazing dance couple but in this case the combination was stunning. The maturity and deep understanding of one another's mastery of dance allowed for basic elements to emerge, cleanly and masterfully.

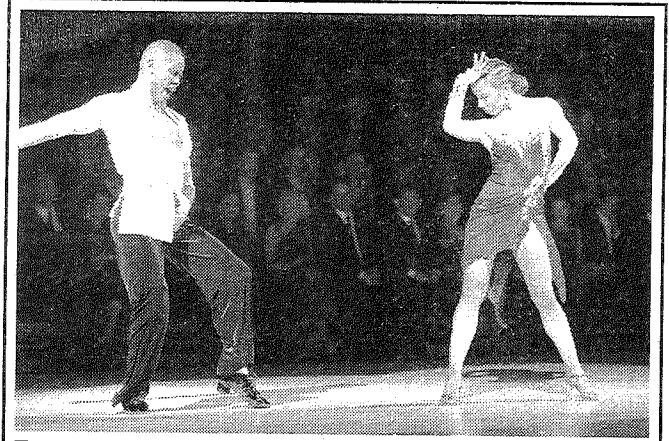


Michael Malitowski & Joanna Leunis

Photo by Stephen Marino

And, last but not least, Gary McDonald - the voice of Dance Legends - deserves high praise for masterfully guiding the spectators through experience after experience.

The Zislins faced many challenges in putting together the Dance Legends event, not least of which were "getting all the performers together in one place at one time, finding a venue that is appropriate and glamorous enough, and of course the audience themselves, getting people here who are so supportive and so appreciative of beautiful dancing." No wonder it took over 4 years to turn this idea into reality!



Emmanuel Pierre-Antoine & Liana Churilova

Photo by Alex Rowan

Emmanuel Pierre-Antoine & Liana Churilova represented the American style Rhythm category on each night, with lively and colorful Cha Cha and Mambo routines that brought the audience to their feet.

The Dance Legends show also included special performances by future stars Pasha Pashkov & Daniella Karagach and Richard Lifshitz & Morgana Lakatos-Hayward, a formation team trained by Benito Garcia, and a performance by the Brooklyn Dance Sport Club, choreographed by their coaches Eugene Katsevman and Maria Manusova. Three distinguished Pro-Am couples [Jolanta Mosteika & Philip Widlanski, Alain Doucet & Beverly Moore, and Alosha Anatoliy & Carolyn Woodruff] had the privilege of performing spectacular show dances as well.



Signage

Photo by Stephen Marino

They had little to fear. Dance Legends did not fail to impress, as each evening went off without a hitch. Audience members waved their complimentary Dance Legends glowsticks and filled the dance floor at each intermission, motivated by the world-class dancers that had shared the floor a few minutes earlier. One long-time ballroom dancer called the show "truly inspirational." Another spectator, an amateur dancesport competitor, was hoped this would be "an annual event like the World Super Stars Dance Festival in Japan, or even better!"

And what did the performers think of Dance Legends? Michael

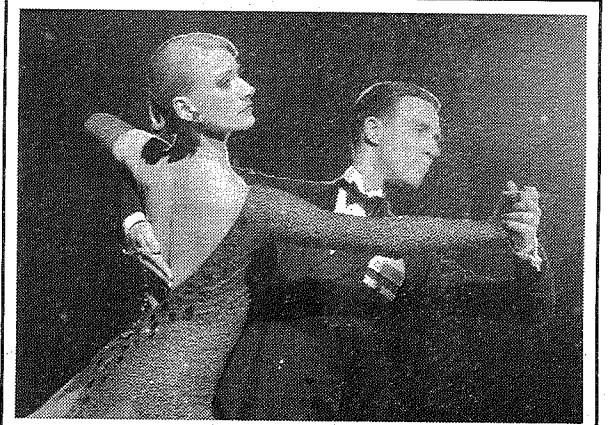
Malitowski and Joanna Leunis called it an "amazing night," while Riccardo Cocchi and Yulia Zagoruychenko "hope the tradition continues." Giampiero Giannico and Caterina Arzenton "will never forget the experience, and hope Dance Legends will grow to become one of the most prestigious events of the ballroom community."

With such accolades coming out of the inaugural show dance spectacular, dance aficionados should definitely count on returning to the Manhattan Center for Dance Legends 2013, scheduled for April 12 & 13, 2013. For more information, please visit www.DanceLegends.com.



Giampiero Giannico & Caterina Arzenton

Photo by Tony Eng



Arunas Bizokas & Katusha Demidova

Photo by Stephen Marino