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6 Ballante INTERNATIONAL DANCESPORT CHAMPIONSHIP

6th Edition

05 APRIL 2025

MARINA BAY SANDS SINGAPORE

t a

THE DANCESPORT ACADEMY BY MELVIN & SHARON







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Archana Satheesh

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Get to know the ins-and-outs of how the adjudicators, dancers, and performance artistes feel about Brillante. Find out what our sponsors stand for and learn how our dance community is getting on as one in Singapore.



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FROM THE ORGANISERS

BIGGER. BETTER. BOLDER. ALWAYS.

It is with immense pleasure that we welcome you to the **6th Brillante International DanceSport Championship 2025**. Brillante International remains a synonym for high quality, fair and unique competition for all who attend. We are heartened by the lasting support from all our friends and colleagues in our industry, and we vow to continuously improve and challenge ourselves to provide a unique and brilliant experience to all.

Last year's Championship proved a highly anticipated comeback following a 4-year hiatus, owing to the COVID pandemic. While the pandemic has now become a thing of the past, unwavering excellence continues to be the goal of everyone at Brillante International. It is therefore our promise to you that the 6th iteration of Brillante, like its predecessors, will continue to be an experience like none other, for audiences and participants alike.

From dawn till dusk, watch this beautiful ballroom in the iconic Marina Bay Sands dazzle with talents from all over the world. As evening arrives, dress to the nines - fit to this year's theme of The Great Gatsby - and prepare to be mesmerised by the competitive prowess of international champions, duelling for the coveted Amateur and Professional titles.

Then, taking the night's splendour to stunning new heights, will be the incomparable Massimo Arcolin & Laura Zmajkovicova - a dynamic duo whose charisma shines equally bright both on and off the dance floor. As they bring you unforgettable showcases that have never been performed in Singapore before tonight, have no doubt that this evening will take your breath away, in the best way possible.

Organising a large scale competition is a daunting task, and we are deeply grateful to our committee members, family and friends. This Championship is only possible with their wonderful efforts! We would also like to thank all our sponsors, Derocks, Greenbay Marine, Brillante Events, DancePassion, and Marina Bay Sands for your invaluable support.

To all competitors sharing our common passion, we wish you an enjoyable experience. May this Championship bring you everlasting memories and inspire the next generation of dancers. And to all guests, we look forward to thrilling your senses, day or night. Once again, we welcome you to our 6th Brillante International DanceSport Championship 2025.





introducing

OUR ADJUDICATORS

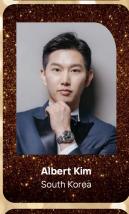








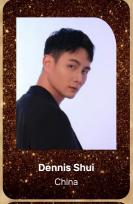














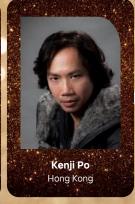












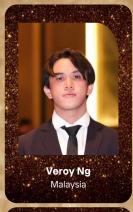






introducing

OUR ADJUDICATORS









































introducing

OUR ADJUDICATORS





DOORS OPEN

6:30

6:30		DOORS OPEN
7:15		ADJUDICATOR'S BRIEFING / LINE UP OF COMPETITORS
7:30		SEGMENT 1 - STANDARD SOLO EVENTS
7:30	1A	Shared Floor 1A Final Standard Solo Beginner 8 - W
7:30	1B	Shared Floor 1B Final Standard Solo Beginner 12 - W
7:32	2	Final Standard Solo Open 8 - T
7:34	3A	Shared Floor 3A Final Standard Solo Beginner 8 - Q
7:34	3B	Shared Floor 3B Final Standard Solo Beginner 12 - Q
7:36	4A	Shared Floor 4A Final Standard Solo Beginner 10 - W
7:36	4B	Shared Floor 4B Final Standard Solo Open 16 - W
7:38	5A	Shared Floor 5A Final Standard Solo Open 10 - T
7:38	5B	Shared Floor 5B Final Standard Solo Open 16 - T
7:40	6A	Shared Floor 6A Final Standard Solo Beginner 10 - VW
7:40	6B	Shared Floor 6B Final Standard Solo Open 16 - VW
7:42	7	Shared Floor 7A Final Standard Solo Beginner 10 - SF
7:44	8A1	Shared Floor 8A1 Final Standard Solo Open Adult - Q
7:44	8A2	Shared Floor 8A2 Final Standard Solo Open 21 - Q
7:44	8B	Shared Floor 8B Final Standard Solo Open 16 - Q
7:46	9A	Shared Floor 9A Final Standard Solo Open Adult - W
7:46	9B	Shared Floor 9B Final Standard Solo Open 21 - W
7:48	10A	Shared Floor 10A Final Standard Solo Open Adult - T
7:48	10B	Shared Floor 10B Final Standard Solo Open 21 -T
7:50	11A	Shared Floor 11A Final Standard Solo Open Adult - VW
7:50	11B	Shared Floor 11B Final Standard Solo Open 21 - VW
7:52	12A	Shared Floor 12A Final Standard Solo Open Adult - SF
7:52	12B	Shared Floor 12B Final Standard Solo Open 21 - SF
7:54		PRIZE PRESENTATION FOR SEGMENT 1 IN THE COMPETITOR'S HALL
8:00		SEGMENT 2 - LATIN SOLO EVENTS
8:00	13 ➤ 34	1st Round Latin Solo Open 16 - C
8:04	14 ➤ 35	1st Round Latin Solo Open 16 - S
8:08	15 ➤ 36	1st Round Latin Solo Open 16 - R
8:12	16 ➤ 37	1st Round Latin Solo Open 16 - J
8:16	17 ➤ 50A	Quarter Final Latin Solo Beginner 10 - C
8:18	18 > 52A	Quarter Final Latin Solo Beginner 10 - R
8:20	19 > 53A	Quarter Final Latin Solo Beginner 10 - J
	I	ı

8:22	20 ≻ 41B	Quarter Final Latin Solo Open 12 - C
8:24	21 ➤ 42B	Quarter Final Latin Solo Open 12 - S
8:26	22 ➤ 43B	Quarter Final Latin Solo Open 12 - R
8:28	23 ➤ 45B	Quarter Final Latin Solo Open 12 - J
8:30	24 ➤ 38	Quarter Final Latin Solo Beginner 8 - C
8:32	25 ➤ 46B	Quarter Final Latin Solo Open 21 - C
8:36	26 ➤ 47B	Quarter Final Latin Solo Open 21 - S
8:40	27 ➤ 48B	Quarter Final Latin Solo Open 21 - R
8:44	28 ≻ 44A	Quarter Final Latin Solo Open 21 - PD
8:46	29 ➤ 49B	Quarter Final Latin Solo Open 21 - J
8:50	30 ≻ 41A	Quarter Final Latin Solo Beginner 12 - C
8:52	31 ≻ 42A	Quarter Final Latin Solo Beginner 12 - S
8:54	32 ≻ 43B	Quarter Final Latin Solo Beginner 12 - R
8:56	33 ≻ 45A	Quarter Final Latin Solo Beginner 12 - J
8:58	34 ≻ 54A	Quarter Final Latin Solo Open 16 - C
9:00	35 ≻ 55A	Quarter Final Latin Solo Open 16 - S
9:02	36 ≻ 56A	Quarter Final Latin Solo Open 16 - R
9:04	37 ≻ 58A	Quarter Final Latin Solo Open 16 - J
9:06	38 ≻ 59A	Semi Final Latin Solo Beginner 8- C
9:08	39 ➤ 61A	Semi Final Latin Solo Beginner 8- R
9:10	40 ➤ 62A	Semi Final Latin Solo Beginner 8- J
9:12	41A ➤ 63A	Semi Final Latin Solo Beginner 12 - C
9:12	41B ➤ 63B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 12 - C
9:14	42A ➤ 64A	Semi Final Latin Solo Beginner 12 - S
9:14	42B ➤ 64B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 12 - S
9:16	43A ➤ 65A	Semi Final Latin Solo Beginner 12 - R
9:16	43B ➤ 65B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 12 - R
9:18	44A ➤ 71B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 21 - PD
9:18	44B ➤ 66B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 12 - PD
9:20	45A ➤ 67A	Semi Final Latin Solo Beginner 12 - J
9:20	45B ➤ 67B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 12 - J
9:22	46A ➤ 83A	Semi Final Latin Solo Beginner Adult - C
9:22	46B ➤ 68B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 21 - C
9:24	47B ➤ 69B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 21 - S
9:26	48A ➤ 85A	Semi Final Latin Solo Beginner Adult - R

9:26	48B ➤ 70B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 21 - R
9:28	49A ➤ 86A	Semi Final Latin Solo Beginner Adult - J
9:28	49B ➤ 72B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 21 - J
9:30	50A ➤ 73A	Semi Final Latin Solo Beginner 10 - C
9:30	50B ➤ 73B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 10 - C
9:32	51A ➤ 74A	Semi Final Latin Solo Beginner 10 - S
9:32	51B ➤ 74B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 10 - S
9:34	52A ➤ 75A	Semi Final Latin Solo Beginner 10 - R
9:34	52B ➤ 75B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 10 - R
9:36	53A ➤ 77A	Semi Final Latin Solo Beginner 10 - J
9:36	53B ➤ 77B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 10 - J
9:38	54A ➤ 78B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 16 - C
9:38	54B ➤ 83B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open Adult - C
9:40	55A ➤ 79B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 16 - S
9:40	55B ➤ 84B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open Adult - S
9:42	56A ➤ 80B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 16 - R
9:42	56B ➤ 85B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open Adult - R
9:44	57A ➤ 81B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 16 - PD
9:46	58A ➤ 82B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open 16 - J
9:46	58B ➤ 86B	Semi Final Latin Solo Open Adult - J
9:48	59A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 8 - C
9:48	59B	Final Latin Solo Open 8 - C
9:50	60A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 8 - S
9:50	60B	Final Latin Solo Open 8 - S
9:52	61A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 8 - R
9:52	61B	Final Latin Solo Open 8 - R
9:54	62A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 8 - J
9:54	62B	Final Latin Solo Open 8 - J
9:56	63A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 12 - C
9:56	63B	Final Latin Solo Open 12 - C
9:58	64A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 12 - S
9:58	64B	Final Latin Solo Open 12 - S
10:00	65A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 12 - R
10:00	65B	Final Latin Solo Open 12 - R
10:02	66A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 12 - PD

10:02	66B	Final Latin Solo Open 12 - PD
10:04	67A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 12 - J
10:04	67B	Final Latin Solo Open 12 - J
10:06	68A1	Final Latin Solo Beginner 21 - C
10:06	68A2	Final Latin Solo Beginner 6- C
10:06	68B	Final Latin Solo Open 21 - C
10:08	69A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 21 - S
10:08	69B	Final Latin Solo Open 21 - S
10:10	70A1	Final Latin Solo Beginner 21 - R
10:10	70A2	Final Latin Solo Beginner 6 - R
10:10	70B	Final Latin Solo Open 21 - R
10:12	71B	Final Latin Solo Open 21 - PD
10:14	72A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 21 - J
10:14	72B	Final Latin Solo Open 12 - J
10:16	73A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 10 - C
10:16	73B	Final Latin Solo Open 10 - C
10:18	74A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 10 - S
10:18	74B	Final Latin Solo Open 10 - S
10:20	75A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 10 - R
10:20	75B	Final Latin Solo Open 10 - R
10:22	76A1	Final Latin Solo Beginner 10 - PD
10:22	76A2	Final Latin Solo Open Adult - PD
10:22	76B	Final Latin Solo Open 10 - PD
10:24	77A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 10 - J
10:24	77B	Final Latin Solo Open 10 - J
10:26		PRIZE PRESENTATION FOR SEGMENT 2 EVENTS 59A - 63B IN THE
		COMPETITIOR'S HALL
10:26	78A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 16 - C
10:26	78B	Final Latin Solo Open 16 - C
10:28	79A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 16 - S
10:28	79B	Final Latin Solo Open 16 - S
10:30	80A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 16 - R
10:30	80B	Final Latin Solo Open 16 - R
10:32	81A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 16 - PD
10:32	81B	Final Latin Solo Open 16 - PD

10:34	82A	Final Latin Solo Beginner 16 - J
10:34	82B	Final Latin Solo Open 16 - J
10:36	83A	Final Latin Solo Beginner Adult - C
10:36	83B	Final Latin Solo Open Adult - C
10:38	84A	Final Latin Solo Beginner Adult - S
10:38	84B	Final Latin Solo Open Adult - S
10:40	85A	Final Latin Solo Beginner Adult - R
10:40	85B	Final Latin Solo Open Adult - R
10:42	86A	Final Latin Solo Beginner Adult - J
10:42	86B	Final Latin Solo Open Adult - J
10:44		PRIZE PRESENTATION FOR SEGMENT 2 EVENTS 64A - 86B IN THE
		COMPETITIOR'S HALL
10:55		SEGMENT 3 - STANDARD COUPLE EVENTS
10:55	87 ➤ 101	Semi Final Standard Adult Over-45
11:01	88A1	Final Standard Beginners Waltz
11:01	88A2	Final Standard Teacher-Student Waltz
11:01	88B1	Final Standard Pro-Am Waltz
11:01	88B2	Final Standard Pro-Am Over 40 Waltz
11:03	89A1	Final Standard Beginners Tango
11:03	89A2	Final Standard Teacher-Student Tango
11:03	89B1	Final Standard Pro-Am Tango
11:03	89B2	Final Standard Pro-Am Over 40 Tango
11:05	90A1	Final Standard Beginners Slow Foxtrot
11:05	90A2	Final Standard Teacher-Student Slow Foxtrot
11:05	90B1	Final Standard Pro-Am Slow Foxtrot
11:05	90B2	Final Standard Pro-Am Over 40 Slow Foxtrot
11:07	91A1	Final Standard Beginners Quickstep
11:07	91A2	Final Standard Teacher-Student Quickstep
11:07	91B	Final Standard Pro-Am Quickstep
11:09	92	Final Standard Novice A
11:13	93	Final Standard Amateur Rising Star
11:21	94A	Final Standard Teacher-Student 2-Dance
11:21	94B	Final Standard Pro-Am 2-Dance
11:25	95A	Final Standard Juvenile 12 Yrs and Below B
11:25	95B	Final Standard Novice B

11:29	96	Final Standard Adult Over-55
11:33	97A	Final Standard Teacher-Student 4-Dance
11:33	97B	Final Standard Pro-Am 4-Dance
11:41	98A	Final Standard Combined Age Over 90 A
11:41	98B	Final Standard Juveline 12 Yrs and Below A
11:45	99	Final Standard Amateur Asia Pacific
11:55	100A1	Final Standard Pre-Amateur
11:55	100A2	Final Standard Pro-Am 3-Dance
11:55	100B	Final Standard Comined Aged Over 120 A
12:01	101	Final Standard Adult Over-45
12:07	102A	Final Standard Teacher-Student 5-Dance
12:07	102B	Final Standard Pro-Am 5-Dance
12:17	103	Final Standard Combined Age Over 120 B
12:21	104	Final Standard Amateur South East Asia
12:31		PRIZE PRESENTATION FOR SEGMENT 3 EVENTS 88A1 - 97A IN THE
		COMPETITIOR'S HALL
12:31	105A	Final Standard Professional Rising Star
12:31	105B1	Final Standard Pro-Am Over 50 Waltz
12:31	105B2	Final Standard Pro-Am Over 50 Tango
12:31	105B3	Final Standard Pro-Am Over 50 Viennese Waltz
12:31	105B4	Final Standard Pro-Am Over 50 Slow Foxtrot
12:31	105B5	Final Standard Pro-Am Over 50 Quickstep
12:41	106A	Final Standard Combined Age Over 70 B
12:41	106B	Final Standard Combined Age Over 90 B
12:45	107	Final Standard Adult Over-35
12:53		PRIZE PRESENTATION FOR SEGMENT 3 EVENTS 97A - 108 IN THE
		COMPETITIOR'S HALL
12:53		BREAK
13:05		SEGMENT 4 - LATIN PARTNER EVENTS
13:05	108 ➤ 116	Quarter Final Latin Amateur Rising Star
13:21	109 ➤ 117	Semi Final Latin Novice A
13:25	110A1	Final Latin Cmobined Age Over 120 A
13:25	110A2	Final Latin Teacher-Student 2-Dance
13:25	110B	Final Latin Pro-Am 2-Dance
13:29	111	Final Latin Beginner Cha Cha
13:31	112 ➤ 132	Quarter Final Latin Amateur Asia Pacific

13:51	113 ➤ 123	Semi Final Latin Novice B
13:55	114A1	Final Latin Teacher-Student Cha Cha
13:55	114A2	Final Latin Pro-Am Over 40 Cha Cha
13:55	114B	Final Latin Beginners All-Girls Cha Cha
13:57	115A	Final Latin Junior
13:57	115B	Final Latin Combined Age Over 70 A
14:03	116 ➤ 127	Semi Final Latin Amateur Rising Star
14:11	117	Final Latin Novice A
14:15	118A	Final Latin Teacher-Students 3-Dance
14:15	118B	Final Latin Pro-Am 3-Dance
14:21	119 ➤ 131	Semi Final Latin Pre-Amateur
14:27	120 ➤ 135	Semi Final Latin Amateur South East Asia
14:37	121A1	Final Latin Beginner Samba
14:37	121A2	Final Latin Beginners All-Girls Samba
14:37	121B1	Final Latin Teacher-Student Samba
14:37	121B2	Final Latin Pro-Am Over 40 Samba
14:39	122A	Final Latin Juvenile 12 Yrs and Below B
14:39	122B	Final Latin Combined Age Over 90 A
14:43	123	Final Latin Novice B
14:47	124 > 129A	Semi Final Latin Youth
14:55	125A1	Final Latin Teacher-Student 4-Dance
14:55	125A2	Final Latin Pro-Am Over 50 Cha Cha
14:55	125A3	Final Latin Pro-Am Over 50 Samba
14:55	125A4	Final Latin Pro-Am Over 50 Rumba
14:55	125B	Final Latin Pro-Am 4-Dance
15:03	126	Final Latin Beginner Rumba
15:05	127	Final Latin Amateur Rising Star
15:13	128A	Final Latin Teacher-Student Rumba
15:13	128B1	Final Latin Pro-Am Over 40 Rumba
15:13	128B2	Final Latin Beginner All-Girls Rumba
15:15	129A	Final Latin Youth
15:15	129B	Final Latin Combined Age Over 90 B
15:23	130A	Final Latin Adult Over-45
15:23	130B	Final Latin Novice All-Girls A
15:29	131	Final Latin Pre Amateur

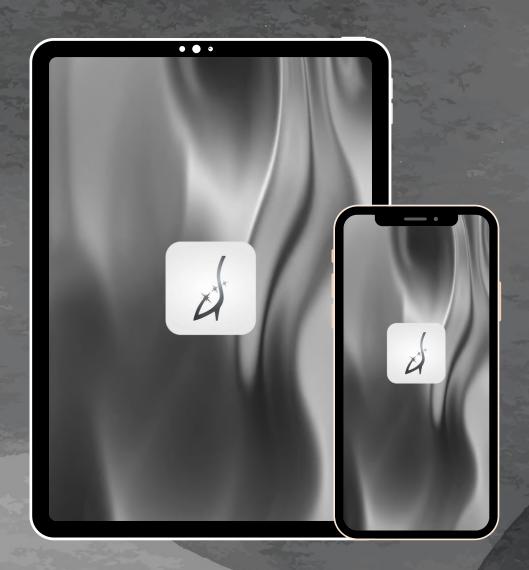
15:35	132 ➤ 137	Semi Final Latin Amateur Asia Pacific	
15:45	133	Final Latin Juvenile 12 Yrs and Below A	
15:49	134A1	Final Latin Pro-Am 5-Dance	
15:49	134A2	Final Latin Combined Age Over 70 B	
15:49	134A3	Final Latin Beginner All-Girls Jive	
15:49	134B1	Final Latin Beginner Paso Doble	
15:49	134B2	Final Latin Beginner Jive	
15:59	135	Final Latin Amateur South East Asia	
16:09		PRIZE PRESENTATION FOR SEGMENT 4 EVENTS 111A - 124 IN THE COMPETITIOR'S	
		HALL	
16:09	136A	Final Latin Adult Over-35	
16:09	136B	Final Latin Novice All-Girls B	
16:17	137	Final Latin Amateur Asia Pacific	
16:27	138	Final Latin Professional Rising Star	
16:37	139 ➤ 143	Quarter Final Latin Amateur Open	
16:57		PRIZE PRESENTATION FOR SEGMENT 4 EVENTS 126A1 - 139 IN THE	
		COMPETITIOR'S HALL	
		END OF DAY PROGRAMME	
	1	1	

Wight PROGRAMME

A .		
18:00	START OF NIGHT PROGRAMME	I GOT I
20	ARRIVAL OF GUESTS	S COOL
18:30	Quarter-Final Latin Professional Open	C, S, R, PD, J
18:50	Semi-Final Standard Amateur Open	W, T, VW, SF, Q
19:00	Semi-Final Latin Professional Asia Pacific	C, S, R, PD, J
19:10	Semi-Final Latin Amateur Open	C, S, R, PD, J
19:20	Semi-Final Standard Professional Asia Pacific	W, T, VW, SF, Q
19:30	WELCOME SPEECH	COROLL (
19:35	DINNER IS SERVED	184136
19:40	INTRODUCTION OF ADJUDICATORS & SCRUTI	NEERS
20:05	Semi-Final Latin Professional Open	C, S, R, PD, J
20:15	SPECIAL GUEST PERFORMANCE	
20:20	Semi-Final Standard Professional Open	W, T, VW, SF, Q
20:30	GENERAL DANCING	77, 1, 777, 51, 9
20:40	Final Standard Professional Asia Pacific	W, T, VW, SF, Q
20:50	GUEST ARTISTS PERFORMANCE	
20:55	Final Latin Professional Asia Pacific	C, S, R, PD, J
21:05	GENERAL DANCING	1
21:15	GUEST ARTISTS PERFORMANCE	16 0
21:20	Final Standard Professional Open	W, T, VW, SF, Q
21:35	Final Latin Amateur Open	C, S, R, PD, J
21:50	GENERAL DANCING	
22:00	GUEST ARTISTS PERFORMANCE	
22:05	Final Standard Amateur Open	W, T, VW, SF, Q
22:20	Final Latin Professional Open	C, S, R, PD, J
22:35	PRIZE PRESENTATION	COOK
22:45	GUEST ARTISTE PERFORMANCE	
22:50	HONOUR DANCE PERFORMANCE (PROFESSIO	NAL OPEN)
22:55	GUEST ARTISTE PERFORMANCE	
23:00	GENERAL DANCING	
23:30	TILL WE MEET AGAIN	

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DANCESPORT CHAMPIONSHIPS FOR TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS



Over the years, we have continued to bring together the DanceSport athletes of Tertiary Institutions, giving them a platform to challenge one another in friendly competition, regardless of their association.

We believe that there should be independent competitions that are open to any participant. This opens the opportunity to compete with a large pool of dancers in Singapore, which is important to create an environment that allows the identification of top talent, as well as an opportunity for the beginners to better themselves.

To make this vision a reality, the TDA

DanceSport Championships, featuring
the Singapore Inter-Tertiary DanceSport
Championships, was created. Now in its
14th series, the TDA DanceSport
Championships have grown into the largest
Inter-Tertiary DanceSport competition in
Singapore, with competitors from more than
15 local and international Tertiary Institutions
vying for the top spot.









The inaugural TDA DanceSport Championship was launched in July 2010 at the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Convention Centre, with participation from five Institutions. The event consisted of Tertiary Closed Events that provided young dance students from the various schools in Singapore to compete and vie for the title of "Tertiary Champion".

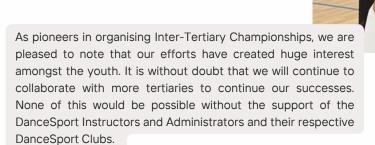
This Championship series was co-organised by Ang Mo Kio Community Centre Women's Executive Committee, and has been graced by illustrious Guests of Honor, such as Dr Amy Khor, Mr Seng Han Thong and Mr Yam Ah Mee.

Since then, the TDA Championship series has evolved into an established national DanceSport competition with more than 300 local competitors.

Now approaching its 14th iteration, the TDA Championship has been steadily growing over the years with additions of new events to cater to a larger base of competitors. From the Tertiary Closed to Open Amateur and Junior events, the TDA Championship series has events for those who are new to the sport as well as the more experienced dancers.



DanceSport



Both series, TDA and PassionArts, aimed at developing youth DanceSport Athletes through competition exposure, will continue to elevate the sport through competitions at an Inter-Varsity level and ultimately hone the next generation of DanceSport Athletes in Singapore.





undamentals not important anymore?

by Ralf Lepehne



World Latin Show Dance Champion

World British Open & European Professional Latin Grand Finalist

9 Times German Professional Latin Champion

World renowned Coach, Lecturer and Adjudicator

Are fundamentals important? Yes, or no?

My thoughts on it:

The fundamentals in Latin American dancing are absolutely essential as they form the foundation for technique, musicality, and expression. Without a solid grasp of these basics, it becomes challenging to execute advanced figures cleanly, dance harmoniously with a partner, or convey the energy and emotion of the dances authentically.

The most important fundamentals include:

- 1. **Posture and Body Alignment:** Maintaining a controlled posture with a correct axis is crucial for balance and stability.
- 2. **Body Isolation:** The ability to move the upper body, hips, and legs independently is key, especially for characteristic movements like Cuban Motion.
- 3. **Timing and Rhythm:** Understanding the music and executing movements precisely to the rhythm is vital to capturing the essence of each dance.
- 4. **Weight Transfer:** Shifting body weight intentionally between the feet allows for fluid and powerful movements.
- 5. **Leading and Following:** Clear communication between the leader and follower is essential for harmonious dancing.
- 6. **Basic Steps:** Each dance (Cha Cha, Samba, Rumba, Paso Doble and Jive) has specific basic steps that must be mastered to build upon them.

Are undamentals not important anymore?

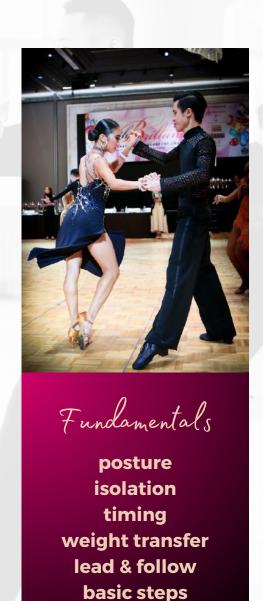
Without these fundamentals, dancers may lose control over their technique and expression, resulting in a less authentic and polished style. Mastering the basics is **not only important for beginners but also for advanced dancers** who want to continually refine their quality and performance.

The trend of prioritizing speed over quality in teaching and learning dance is concerning. While it may seem efficient to focus on quick results—like performing flashy routines or learning advanced figures—this approach often sacrifices the **technical foundation and artistry that define exceptional dancing.**

Skipping or rushing through the fundamentals leads to superficial results. Dancers may look impressive in the short term but lack the control, musicality, and depth required for true mastery. Over time, this can result in **bad habits, injuries, and a limited ability to progress**. Without a strong base, even advanced movements lose their impact because they lack precision and authenticity.

For teachers, the pressure to produce visible results quickly can lead to neglecting proper technique in favor of choreographing visually appealing routines. While this might **satisfy short-term goals—such as competitions or performances**—it does a disservice to students who miss out on developing skills that will sustain them throughout their dance journey.

I believe it's essential to **strike a balance between progress and quality**. Teachers should emphasize the importance of fundamentals and help students understand that patience and consistent practice will lead to more profound and lasting results. **A dancer with strong basics will always stand out**, not just for their movements but for the way they connect with the music, their partner, and the audience.



Are undamentals not important anymore?



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A significant challenge today is the widespread influence of social media, where incorrect teaching is often glamorized and shared widely. While platforms like Instagram and TikTok can inspire dancers and make the art more accessible, they also promote shortcuts, superficial techniques, and trends that prioritise entertainment over education.

Many social media "teachers" lack the proper training themselves and focus on producing content that looks flashy rather than offering correct, foundational instruction. This **can mislead aspiring dancers into thinking that impressive tricks or routines matter more** than mastering the basics, resulting in poor habits and even potential injuries.

True progress in dance cannot come from quick, flashy tutorials. It requires structured, consistent learning from qualified educators who understand the **importance of proper technique**, **musicality**, **and the cultural roots of each dance style**.

For a better future in dance, we need to encourage dancers to seek out legitimate, in-depth training and be critical of the content they consume online. Social media should be a supplement to education, not a replacement for it. By combining correct, regular teaching with a discerning approach to online content, we can create a community that values authenticity and excellence.

When dancers are educated properly, they not only achieve technical excellence but also learn to respect the art form and contribute to its growth. Together, with a collective commitment to quality and education, we can create a dance community that values artistry, integrity, and longevity.



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INTERVIEW WITH MASSIMO & LAURA

How does it feel to return as a guest artiste at the 6th Brillante after being Champions at the 2nd Brillante, back in 2015? I'm not sure if you still remember that!

Laura: Yes! Of course we remember, because it was one of our first competitions, in our early days together. And actually, I think I even danced in the first one, with my previous partner. So yes, very happy to be back!

We are definitely looking forward, and are very excited to perform in Singapore again. We love Melvin and Sharon - I think the events they put together are excellent.

Massimo: In general, it's also been a long time since we've performed there.

Laura: Yes, we haven't been to Singapore for a while, so we're very excited to be there. We know a lot of people in Singapore, so I think they will come to support us as well. It'll be nice to see familiar faces, as well as some new faces - we are really looking forward to that!

We're very much looking forward to welcoming you both as well! What can we expect from the special performance you'll be bringing us this year?

Laura: Well, we always work really hard to prepare special shows. We would spend a lot of time and energy - and money - to build really special pieces, for every dance. We don't take it for granted. It's not the same as our competition performances, but our show performance always has something special, something you might not see on a competition floor.

We love developing and creating it, because we feel that it always gets us to move our limits to another level as well. We get to explore something new that, perhaps later, we bring even to our competitive dancing.

Massimo: And of course, every year, we try to change something between our shows. Maybe we cannot change all the shows, every time, but we always try to.

Laura: But all the shows that we will be dancing are ones that nobody in Singapore has seen yet, so I think they're all new shows! We have danced them before, but not yet in Singapore, so it'll be completely new for our Singaporean audience.

Massimo: The important thing is that they don't watch Laura's Instagram. Otherwise... (Laura laughs)

No, I think it really is different when you see it live!

Massimo: For sure!

Laura: Absolutely, the energy of the performance is completely different when it's live.



I often imagine a scene, or imagine some kind of picture or visual that I would like to see and surprise the audience with, from the very first moment that the show starts.

Speaking of creating new choreographies for each show, how do you actually conceptualise each piece that you want to do? Do you start with the music, or perhaps a story?

Massimo: It's a long process...

Laura: Yes, it really depends...

Massimo: First, we start with a fight (both laugh) to decide on the music, because we have completely different tastes.

Laura: Yea, many times, especially when it comes to Samba, we always have different opinions. It takes time to find the common one that we will both be happy with. We are both very picky, with strong personalities, as you can see.

Massimo: But usually, we start with music first, because we get inspired from music. Sometimes we see videos and get inspiration from there, to pick up some kind of energy, or some kind of concept.

It's always different, becomes sometimes, we already have a concept in mind, and then we search for the right music. Other times, we hear music somewhere, and immediately say, *okay*, *this - we can use it*, and then, we take it from there.

Laura: I am very visual in my imagination, so I often imagine a scene, or imagine some kind of picture or visual that I would like to see and surprise the audience with, from the very first moment that the show starts.

For example, I might imagine a scene of someone laying on the floor, and then something starting to develop from there, and so on. In that way, it doesn't always start with the music, but that is many times the inspiration.

We might find a beautiful piece of music, but we always keep actively looking. We spend hours and days and months to search for the right music - we always want to find something that no one has ever used before, something original.

Massimo: Of course, many times, we combine it with other kinds of sounds, or other music.



Laura: Yea, we find ways to combine some songs that, maybe, people would not think to combine together. That's also a good inspiration for us.

Different styles, as well. We like to bring in a little bit from different styles, not just original Latin. Maybe some steps from Hip Hop and so on...

Massimo: I can say that we almost never start from steps. Probably, maybe 90% of the time, it doesn't start with, "oh, we have this step, we need to do it in a show", no.

Laura: Yes, it could be the mood or the story instead.

One of the most memorable things you've done that comes to mind is the show with the table - I've never seen people bring a table, and a *girl* on top of the table, to the dance floor - so I understand what you mean, and I really appreciate the amount of effort that you put into making sure each show is unforgettable in that way.

Massimo: No table this year though!

Laura: We always had to buy the same table, in every country. We'd tell each organiser, "this is the exact table we need", because of the size and structure we needed. We had a table in China, then we had one in Taiwan, in London, in Italy, Hong Kong... every country we went, even in Dubai.

Massimo: There was only time time that we were not able to get that exact table from IKEA. I had to manage with a different table. It was a little bit harder, but in the end, we could manage!

I heard that for one of the tables, you actually got everyone to sign the top, and you kept it?

Laura: Correct! We have it at home, with all the signatures.

Massimo: Yea, that was in Italy!

That sounds awesome! So when you finish a show, whether it's a competition or a performance, what makes you feel like you've done a good job?

Laura: Actually, we are very critical, so that's a good question!

Massimo: Veeery critical, both of us.

Laura: But I think it's important to always set some kind of goal. For us, most of the time, it's not really tied to a result. Of course, it's great when the results are there, but I think it's difficult to achieve something when you have your mind on just a number.

It's always better when it is set on a goal, something physical that you want to achieve, or something you want to surpass.

Massimo: For example, if we've just created a new show, we might feel ready when we are rehearsing it by ourselves, but when it is our first time performing it on a stage, the goal is to be able to do it in front of everybody.

Even though we have been dancing for many years, the show would still be a new one, so for us to be able to do it well, perform it, and have it come out nicely... that's the goal.

We pay attention to that feeling when we're dancing, so many times after we finish we might look at each other like, okay, this was good. Then, after we repeat the show a few times, we start to become more critical - that time was better, or this time was better than the previous two, the energy was better, and so on.

In that way, the goal is always important to us, but it can be a different thing that we are looking forward to each time.

The goal is always important to us, but it can be a different thing we are looking forward to each time.

Laura: Although, on one hand, we are very critical, I do still come back to the thought that, I have done the best I could at that moment. That is the goal, always. Sometimes, you know, you have a better day, and sometimes you have a worse day. That can happen to anyone, even to Professionals.

It doesn't matter how much you train - you're still a human, so at the end of the day, the most important thing is if I really did everything I could. I'm always happy with that, because I think we always go full power.

Massimo: That is probably the common thing, between the shows and competition.

Laura: Absolutely.

Massimo: I mean, we know that we cannot repeat the same thing all the time, because it comes a little too... robotic, let's say. So each time will be slightly different, whether it's the day, or the feeling for each other.

We try to have it fresh all the time, to renew something inside of ourselves. That's the main point, and to give a hundred percent each time.

And of course, the appreciation from the people watching. It's a bonus, because I feel that if the audience doesn't like something, they don't stand up.

If they feel like they are not getting something from us, of course it'll be more difficult for them to stand up - at least that's how I feel - so the appreciation is not something that we search for, but we stay focused on our job, and the way the audience react is then just a result of that. But of course, we are very happy when it happens!

I'll be making sure everyone at my table stands up then!

Laura: (laughs) No worries at all!

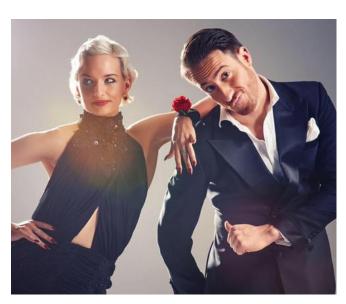
So, when you've completed a show, and are preparing for the next one, I'm sure you want to make it even better than before. When you are rehearsing each day, though, there isn't really a report card at the end of the day saying, "you did your best today", so how do you really know...

Massimo: Don't worry, there is a report... (Laura laughs)

Really? Do you give each other a report?

Massimo: Perhaps not on the same day. Sometimes we find that when we tell each other things on the same day - or even the hour straight after the show, when we are in the room or something - we can talk about it, but then we let go a little, because usually, it's too fresh and your reaction may be too... impulsive.

So then we head to sleep and come back to it at a later time, and then we actually start to look at it with a clearer head. We can start to talk about, *Did this work? No, this didn't work, let's make it better.*



That makes sense! But do you think there's a way we can measure whether or not we are doing our best?

Laura: Absolutely. I think as you try something more and more, you're going to feel whether it's working, or whether you're getting better at the ability. You have to start listening to this, because as many of our close teachers still often say, "The best teacher is yourself. You know yourself the best."

And it's really true, because if you are honest with yourself, you know whether you really put all your effort into the step, or into the movement, or into your practice, or whether you're kind of just walking around and marking it, and so on. You'll know that very well.

And you can always check with a video - we do that often, because many times, you feel like you did something, but then you check the video and you're like... yea, not really. Or, we ask each other: Can you please have a look at this? What do you think? Can you see that I'm trying to do this? Is it coming out? And so on.

We help each other in this way, but I think the more and more you try it, the more you will feel it - yes, I am always in balance, or, yes, I start to feel the power in my body.

You have to start, I think, asking the questions and then finding the answers to those questions, whether it's by yourself, or, when you can't find it yourself, by asking someone, like your partner or your teacher. The important thing is that the drive is coming from you.

Massimo: Yes, because of course, many times, what you feel inside could be different from what she sees from the outside, or what you see, or what the teachers see.

Using whatever you know right now, do your 10, every time.

Laura: Sure, but when it comes to the measurement, I think you do know. Even when we teach, I often ask the couple - especially when it's a new couple that I don't know so well, where I feel that they know each other better than I know them - if they could mark themselves at that moment from 1 to 10, ten being the best they can do that day, how many points they would give themselves. Many times, people say four, or five, or six. Sometimes, they say seven. Very rarely does somebody say ten.

And so, when you say it's not a 10, that mean there's something missing. It may not be something that I can teach you, or that anybody else needs to teach you. Using whatever you know right now, do your 10, every time. If I really focus on doing the best I can each time, I'm sure the improvement will get faster.

And then, you know, when you finish doing the step and ask yourself, "Was it my 10?" and you answer, "Yes!", it might turn out that on the video, it still doesn't look okay.

In that case, you know that maybe you need to change it a little bit, but the first thing is, you always have to go to the most of what you can do in that moment. It doesn't always mean the biggest, but rather the most concentrated, using your body the most, and so on. In that way, I think you can start to measure yourself more and more, you know?



Yea, I think that's a very helpful answer! So, when you talk about practising together with your partner, what does a typical practice session look like for the both of you?

Laura: I think it depends a little bit on the period of time, and what we are preparing for.

Massimo: And, at different points in our career together, it has also been different. For example, now, the practice is more specific, compared to the beginning.

Laura: In the beginning, of course, you try to make everything work together and so on. Now, I think we have danced enough together that we know each other pretty well and...

Massimo: It's more detailed, in a way. It's less general.

Laura: Yes, and what I think is very important for us as a structure is always understanding what the goal of the practice is. You always have to have a goal for every task, whether it's for your day, or for this week, or the month. You always have a goal, so that is a constant for us.

How we practise then depends on that, because if we have come home from a major event, like we just did, then we have to analyse, of course - what has to be better, what was really good, what we want to keep strengthening, and so on - but we always start by going back to the base, you know? We start stripping down all the energy and going back to the slower motions, and so on.

Massimo: Of course, you have your warm up first. We always start separately, because most fights during practice start when you get in touch immediately...

Laura: ...when you are not ready yet.

Massimo: Yes, so we have learnt to start separately, to warm ourselves up, to be ready with our own bodies first. And then we get in touch.

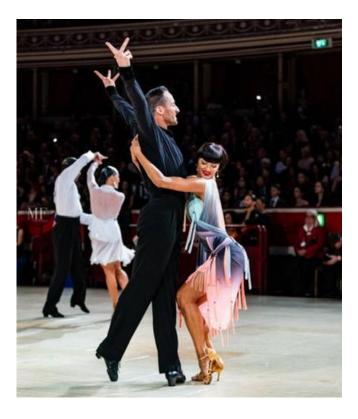
Laura: The length of all this warm up, or the dancing together, or even *what* we are dancing together, all depends on the period. For example, after a major event, like now, we would normally practise three hours a day, and we would start slowly, pace it accordingly.

We would spend time apart first, maybe half an hour, or slightly less, and then start to work on what we want to improve on.

Massimo: Of course, it could also be different subjects. She could practise something, and I could practise something else. Even if we are dancing together, it could be different things that we are working on for ourselves.

Then, if you look at the week, we also structure the week in different ways. You have some days when you work on more technical stuff, maybe for that particular choreography or that particular dance.

You plan on which day to do stamina training and rounds with all five dances, so it's not so much about the details, more like a competition. Sometimes you have a show coming up, so you practise for the show. It always depends.



Laura: But I think it's really important that no matter what period it is, whether we are preparing for a competition, or if we are just in a training period, to always make sure that we balance how many dances are practised in each session.

Many times, people make that mistake where they practise Rumba, and then, the next day, they still hadn't finished practising the Rumba from the day before, so they continue practising it, and then, by the end of the week, maybe they manage to get to Cha Cha, *maybe*. So we make sure that we work on a minimum of 3 dances, every practice.

Massimo: But through the week, you need to have all five dances done. Then, the next week, you can still come back to the same five dances and work on different points of each dance.

Laura: If it is a competition period, then we definitely practise five dances a day, for sure. Even if you have only 20 minutes per dance, that's already good enough.

Changing gears now to talk about your experiences being a dance teacher, I remember attending your online lectures with TDA during the pandemic.

Massimo & Laura Master Class - The Cuban M... - Shared screen with speaker view

↑ Add to Zoon



Laura & Massimo posing for a group photo after a Zoom workshop back in August 2020.

I felt intimidated at the idea of learning from Professionals at first, but after joining the class, I realised it was a very comfortable and enriching environment. It makes me look forward to learning more at the dance camp this time around as well!

When you are going into a class or lecture to teach, what is your priority, and what is the mindset that you approach your students with?

Laura: Well, of course, for me, the priority is always to inspire people, and to give them knowledge to help them move towards whatever their goal is, because I think everybody is dancing for slightly different reasons. It might be a bit of everything, or it might be just one goal, you know.

So I always try to look at the group. I always ask the organiser: Who are the students? Are they all soloists? Is it all couples? Are they competitors? Are there more Pro-Am students?

I think everybody has a little bit of a different goal in what they want to achieve, and why they are dancing, and what their excitement about dancing is. I always aim to definitely go towards that direction.

Especially because we are still competing, we feel that although we are teachers, we are also still competitors, just like the students.

Massimo: Of course, many times, the topic is already assigned by your own teacher, or the organiser, so we follow that.

Laura: In that case, we try to give our knowledge, as much as we know about it. Maybe some tricks that we have experience with - whether it helps us, or I can see that it works for the students...

Massimo: Basically, we try to share what could work, and what could help all the dancers in the group. Especially because we are still competing, we feel that although we are teachers, we are also still competitors, just like the students.

Massimo (cont'd): In that way, we feel more connected with them, so we try to let them feel that we are the same. We are just at different levels because of the years of experience and how many years of work we have done, but that is possible for everybody, in a way.

I think we are also very lucky, with the teachers we have around us. They are very human as well, even though they are great champions.

That does resonate with how I felt! Often, I think when we attend classes, there is that sense of needing to keep a distance from the teacher, but it didn't feel that way at all in your classes.

Massimo: The distance is something that, personally, I have never liked. I never had a teacher like that before, but I have had experiences like that, so of course, I always said to myself, "I want to be the most human, as I am with my friends. Professional, of course, but I want to connect with people." I don't want to be out of touch.

Laura: Yea, I think we are also very lucky, with the teachers we have around us. They are very human as well, even though they are great champions.

Massimo: It's also because we know how the dancers feel, because we have been on the other side, and are still on the other side, many times. We know what it feels like when the opposite happens in a class...

Laura: I think encouragement is important. Of course, I am often strict as well, but it's never from a place of trying to put someone down, which I really can't stand when some of the teachers do.

That is something that I really, really don't tolerate, but yes, I am absolutely happy to say the truth to people, to show that hey, maybe this is not really working, or this is something you really need to work on, because otherwise, the results will not be the way you want them to be.



It's not easy, and I am continuing to learn about saying the truth even more, because while I think it's not easy for someone to hear it, it's always about the way you say it to people, and how you find a solution. I'm definitely very solution oriented, so whatever problem there is, there must always be a solution.

Let's talk a bit more about that mindset. You mentioned that you're solution oriented, but at the same time, would you say that you're more goal oriented or process oriented?

Massimo: I think it's a mix of it.

Laura: I think so too, because for us, the goal has always been the focus of where we are going, and in this, I think we are not compromising. We are still focused on the goal, and that will never change.

Massimo: We know what we want, for sure, but the thing is, how do we want to achieve it? It's not easy, but we want to do it in our own way.

We don't want to have an "It doesn't matter," kind of approach. For example, if somebody says, "Just pay everybody, and you're gonna make it!", that is not the way.



I would prefer to stay second or third, without a win, and instead achieve more connection or feel the appreciation from the people, because in a way, those results don't matter.

Laura: We would still be sticking to our goal as well, because the results - they're never *really* the goal.

Massimo: There is always a goal that we want to achieve, but for me, the way that we get there has to also always be our own, in a way that we are comfortable with. That's why I say it's a mix of both.

It makes sense that in order to perform at a high level, you need to have a mix...

Laura: Absolutely, and the process, many times, may even become the goal. You're right, because in the end, sometimes, you realise it's much more fun than actually arriving where you wanted to.



By Archana Satheesh

A CONTINUING CONVERSATION WITH TITANS OF TALENT

MASSIMO ARCOLIN & LAURA ZMAJKOVICOVA

PART II

Massimo

& Laura

INTERVIEW WITH MASSIMO & LAURA (PART II)



In the first half of their charming conversation with us (see Part I), Massimo Arcolin and Laura Zmajkovicova talked about their creative processes, competitive strategies, attitudes surrounding teaching and learning, and more.

Ever gracious with their time and input, the friendly duo continue to share their musings here, taking us on a ride from overcoming difficulties, to surprising tidbits about each other, and even to their furry little companion at home. We begin where we left off, on the topic of mindset.

Speaking of mindset, I am curious about how you deal with difficulty and discomfort. Are you someone who would say, "It's actually not difficult, I can do it," or are you more likely to say, "No, this is difficult, this is a struggle, but I can do it anyway"?

Laura: I think more the second, because there are definitely many, many obstacles. If it was easy, everybody would be world champions. So it's not easy at all - it's a lot of struggle. It's a lot of overcoming physical difficulties, and mental difficulties. The higher you go, it's more mental than physical - that's for sure.

Massimo: Whatever the difficulty is, you need to first realise that there is *something*, because some people say, "Oh, it's nothing, I'm okay," but if you're true to yourself, then you know there is something wrong, or that something isn't working. Only then can you start to think of what to do next, because actually, there are only two outcomes

Either you kind of struggle, and then you stop and leave, or you find the solution, move past the problem, feel better, and continue on. When you realise that you can actually do that, then you feel like you can deal with any obstacle. You can go through it and overcome it.

The problem lies in the beginning, to *realise* something and then *decide* what you want to do. Do you want to stop in front of the problem, or do you want to continue to do something? Of course, it's difficult.

I might feel quite positive in general, but sometimes I have my dark moments too, when I don't even want to go to the studio, or I feel like blocking myself off. I might take one or two days, and then I come out of that

Laura: I think we all have things that are easier for us, and things that are more difficult for us, and it can be different for everybody. I don't believe that there is anyone in the world who always feels like, "Oh, it's easy, I can do it," because for sure, you will find something that is an obstacle. No one is born to be a champion immediately, you know?

Massimo: I also find that usually, we put the obstacle in our head. I found this out because I have some days where everything works out. It doesn't matter what problem there is - I can solve it almost straight away, because my state of mind is different that day. You know how they say, if you wake up on the right side, everything is going to work out?

It could be like that, but if something has already happened in your day, and you arrive to the studio after that, with that problem still in your mind, something new that happens in the studio might not get solved right away. You'll have to keep digging and digging, with an attitude to go into it - into the problem.

Speaking of difficult things, what would you say is the biggest risk that you've taken in your dance career?

Laura: I think we take always some kind of risk.

Massimo: Maybe, in some moments, we think, "Oh, I don't know if I'm going to do it..." but, when you actually think about it, there is nothing that risky. I mean, what can happen? Nothing, you're not going to die. Of course, you're always afraid to lose something, and that can get you a little stuck because you don't know what's going to happen, but I don't know if we can call that a big risk...

Laura: Yea, I'm thinking if there was something big in that way.

Massimo: Oh! There was one time that something happened and it made me go, (gasp) "I'm not gonna do it..." There was once we had to change the show - the day before the show!

Laura: That's true!

Massimo: And I was like, "Uh oh..." We had to change the whole idea, completely, so I freaked out.

Laura: We made a new show, and it was for a really important show.

Massimo: In the morning, we had our lesson, and the teacher said, "I don't want you to perform that. I want you to change it to something else."

Laura: I had a bad feeling about the show we had, which was actually a very successful show.

Massimo: Everybody loved it, and it was something that was pretty sure to go well.

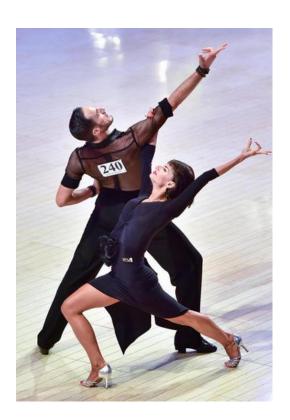
Laura: Yea, but you grow as a dancer, and we came to a point where we had outgrown the show itself. The next day, we had a very important show in London, and we decided that, *okay, we're just gonna make a new one from scratch*.

Massimo: Changed the music, changed the choreography - it was slightly similar, but the concept was different.

Laura: We changed the concept, the music, everything, and we came up with a completely new show from one day to the next. And actually, it was a huge success.

I'm so happy we did that, because even though it was totally different from the one before, it showed much more about the state that we were in, and our improvement was much more visual.

Massimo: But the first few hours, we were freaking out.



Laura: There are other kinds of risks too. For example, I used to teach very little kids, and that was my steady income. At some point, I realised that I had to just stop doing that, even though I didn't have anything else yet.

I knew that if I didn't stop, I would not make the space for doing something else, and creating something. I had to basically say no to a job that was steady, because I knew I had to push myself to the next, higher level, so that was kind of a risk too.

And then you know, even moving to a different country, that was another thing for us - moving to Hong Kong, starting from scratch. It was very tough in the beginning, but in the end, the risk of everything actually paid off very well. It is like that many times. I think maybe you have instinct, inside, and if you listen to that, you will know...

You'll have to keep digging and digging, with an attitude to go into it - into the problem.

Massimo: That's also why it's sometimes tough to call it risky, because the way we see it now, is that it is an opportunity. Yea, there is a risk, but we see it *more* so as an opportunity, so in a more positive than negative way.

Before, when something like this happened, maybe it was seen in a more negative way, but then we learnt to take it, because if you stay in a comfort zone, nothing is going to change.

That's good advice! In interviews, we often hear a lot of great advice like that, but I feel like we don't always talk about the poor advice that gets sent to us along the way. Have you ever received any bad advice?

Massimo: Yes, many! But of course, if it's coming from people that you trust, you try what they ask for and... you never know. That is sometimes a risk too, to try it and then at the end feel that *oh*, *maybe I'm not going to do this anymore*, but first, I think you have to try. It doesn't cost anything.

Laura: I also think that a bad decision is still better...

Both: ...than no decision.

Massimo: Yea, we learnt that.

Laura: And it's totally true. I think one of my biggest strengths is that I'm not afraid to make mistakes, because I think mistakes are where you really learn. Although there are a lot of bad pieces of advice or bad decisions - many of them - I think that's also a way you learn, a way to move yourself forward. You can't really avoid them, so it's important to just keep moving and realising.



Sometimes the bad advice helps you even more, because you find out what you definitely don't want. Then you're closer to knowing what you truly want to do, you know? One of my teachers asked me many, many years ago, "so, what style of a dancer would you like to be?"

And I said, "I really have no idea, but I know that I don't like this, and I don't like that, and I don't like this..." So that was already good, because even though I didn't know what I liked, I started to eliminate what I disliked. In that way, we also started to see a path and where to go. So sometimes, the bad advice is not truly bad. I think it can be good, and healthy.

Sometimes the bad advice helps you even more, because you find out what you definitely don't want.

Then you're closer to knowing what you truly want to do, you know?

Indeed! Now, this is a question for Laura - am I right to say that you have a little bit of background in psychology?

Laura: Well, I really wanted to study psychology, and I did, but just for one year. Then I had to stop, because I had to move to another country for dance.

Has that background helped you in dance as well?

Laura: Well, I think psychology, and working on the mental state of a person, is very important. We keep doing that with our coach, Ruud Vermeij, because he's a psychologist and psychiatrist.

We have sessions with him regularly - weekly, almost - and I think it's so important to work on the mental state of a dancer, of a teacher, of a performer, of a competitor...

Massimo: Especially to understand more about who you are.

Laura: Yea, and also as a team together, because we are two different people - totally different people. Different cultures, different opinions, different habits. And as I said before, two strong personalities.

We want to make it work, so we definitely need to work on the psychology and the mental aspect of the whole relationship as well. So it's good to have that background.

Thank you! Following up now with a question for Massimo. You've mentioned in a previous interview that something you might regret is getting angry at someone.

Do you think there are any situations, especially when working towards a competitive goal, where anger can be helpful? Or do you think it's something disruptive that should be avoided?

Massimo: I think you can use anger beneficially, but not towards others. Of course, I like it when things are done in the right way. It doesn't matter who does something, it still needs to be done the right way. When I see something that's not done right, I do get upset and I might start to feel angry, depending on the situation. That's why I'm...

Laura: A very dramatic Italian! (both laugh)



Massimo: Yes... and I can be quite impulsive, and react straight away, but then I learnt, because of our teacher as well, how to deal with it. How I can use this energy inside myself, to perhaps bring it onto the dance floor, in a different form. It's not always easy.

Laura: It's not always anger, but what kind of emotion you have in that moment.

Massimo: Even if it is anger, as I said before, you need to first acknowledge that something is happening in yourself. I used to sometimes be like, "I'm not angry, I'm not angry, nothing happened."

I kept going with that energy, and later, it felt like I could not even move. Of course, afterwards, I learnt how to deal with it, and how to use it for a better outcome.

Thank you for sharing that! We've spent a lot of questions on quite heavy subjects, so let's change gears to something much more light-hearted.

You could tell from the tail that has been popping in and out of my frame that I have a cat. As you can see, she's on my lap now...

Laura: Awwww...

Massimo: Yea, our cat is not like this! (laughs)

As a cat lover, I often feel inspired and comforted by my cats, especially after a long day.

It makes me wonder if your cat makes you look at life in a different way too. How does Havana inspire you?

Laura: She's so stubborn! (Both laugh) But absolutely, I think animals are amazing.

Massimo: I love animals in general, but I have to say I love dogs a lot more. (*More laughter*)

Laura He said he didn't like cats, but he's the one who chose her!

Massimo: No, I said I always wanted a dog, but then I chose her because we wanted a pet during COVID.

Laura: We went to buy a fish and ended up with a cat...

Massimo: Because I saw this little cat, and then I was like, "Maybe a cat? She might be easier to keep with us, because we travel a lot. Maybe we could keep her, or somebody could keep her while we are away, or they could just come to our house..." and then, we ended up with a cat!



Massimo and Laura's adorable Ragdoll cat. Havana, who was adopted during the ${\hbox{\it COVID}}$ lockdown.

Laura: But yes, I think animals, in general, are a huge inspiration to movement, to dance. Not only their movements, but also their reactions.

Massimo: Of course, no matter what happens during the day, when you arrive home and your pet is there, you feel better, like you could solve any problem. For me, I just melt inside when I see her.

Are you still more of a dog person then?

Massimo: I think so. But of course, I love animals in general, so if she does something that I don't expect, or she just looks at me and comes a little closer...

She's not very cuddly or interested to lie on top of us, but she loves to come closer and sometimes, she throws herself on the floor and tosses and turns around. When she does that, I'm melting already. I'm all over her.

Aww, I know that feeling!

Coming up is our second to last question - what is something about your partner that other people would be surprised to find out?

Massimo: Surprised? I think they know Laura very well! Maybe they would be more surprised to know about me, because the way I appear can be different from how I am.

Laura: Massimo seems very chill from the outside, but he is an extreme perfectionist when it comes to details. He can count millimetres on my dress, or on his outfit.

For our wedding cake, he wrote 86 messages to the person who was making the cake. He even drew the cake and showed them how many centimetres each part had to be. Such a perfectionist, and he was getting all crazy, steamed up about it.

Massimo: (smiles proudly) That's what I said before...

Laura: So much drama: "How is this possible? They are not-They can't do this!" Just furious...

He goes from "super chill" to "extreme, crazy drama" over a millimetre of a cake, and I'm like, (shrugs) honestly, it's as if your life depends on it.

Massimo: As I said before, when I do something, I want to do it well. And I expect that other people are also going to do things well, that things are done in the right way. That's why I always look out for any kind of detail

That's good to know!

Massimo: I also think that many times, people might think I'm very serious, because when I'm outside, if I don't know people, I'm kind of... I have always been a shy boy, so when I'm with new people, I might appear closed and serious.

Laura: He is quite shy, that's true.

Massimo: But actually, I'm the complete opposite. Usually, for me, I need to know the people first.

How about something surprising about Laura?

Massimo: For Laura, it's tough to think of something that might be surprising to others, because she really is just like what you see on the dance floor! Super active and all.

Massimo (con'td): There might be things that people simply don't know about her, but even then, I don't think they would be surprised. For example, they might not know that she's religious, and that she goes to church, but that's not necessarily surprising. I don't know, it's quite tough! Maybe I'll think about it and tell you next time.

Sounds good! Onto our final question - what words of encouragement do you have for our competitors at the 6th Brillante?

Laura: I think... you will never feel ready enough. When people ask me, "Are you ready for the competition?" My answer is, "Always, and never."



You are never going to feel ready, so don't wait, just go. One of my strong mottos is, "Life is too short." If you want to do things, do them.

If you want to compete, if you want to go out there, if you want to take that lesson, go for it.

Massimo: Try something first, and then you can see how it goes and realise if you want more or less of it.

Laura: Yes, people wait for the right time, but I'm not sure if there will ever be anything called the right time, you know?

I think we all learnt that during COVID, because everything suddenly stopped. You never know what might happen, so just do the things you want to

Massimo: Actually, the more you start to think about it, the less likely that you're going to do it. That's that I realised for myself, and so it's an advice that I would give others as well.

Massimo: Go for it, do it first, and then you can reflect on it afterwards. Don't be scared - sometimes you find out that it's less scary than what you thought. So yes, we wish that many competitors will go for it and be there at the championship!

Laura: And good luck for everybody!

Massimo: A lot of luck, and for sure, stay to watch the show! (laughs)

Of course! Thank you both so much - it's been such an enjoyable conversation. We look forward to welcoming you in April!





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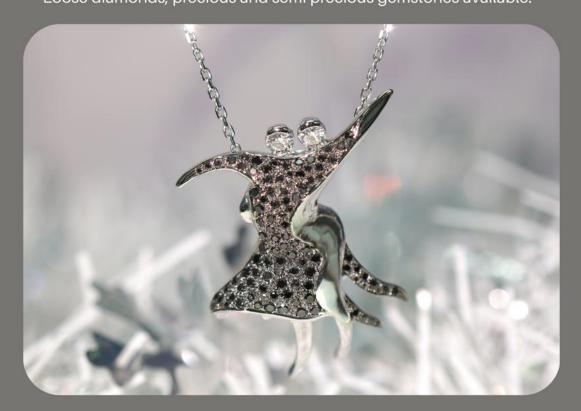






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We wish to extend our deepest gratitude to all who have supported us in this endeavour - our breathtaking guest artistes, esteemed adjudicators, and ambitious competitors.

To our team behind the scenes and on the ground, thank you for pushing through the long hours and managing every curveball that comes with organising an event of this scale. Much of Brillante's success is owed to your sincerity and sacrifice.

Thank you to our sponsors, who have stood by us over the years and enabled us to bring Brillante to ever greater heights. Your support is deeply appreciated.

Finally, we present our deepest bow before you, our audience members. Thank you for gracing our event with zest, and bringing much excitement to the Brillante atmosphere.

It has been our honour and privilege to bring yet another Brillante to you, bigger, bolder and better. We look forward to welcoming you back again, at the 7th Brillante International.

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