

German Open Championships 2002/5 - On the spot report by Werner J. Braun, WJB

Dance Academy Mannheim - Interview with Donnie Burns MBE

WJB: Who had the idea and initiated the founding of a Dance Academy in Germany?

Donnie: It was Michel Mauge, Organiser of the GOC, who had the idea and presented his concept to the GOC Steering Committee. There it was unanimously accepted

WJB: What was the main point in this concept?

Donnie: Instead of the GOC Training Camp, which this year could not be realised, there should be set up a non profit making foundation in form of a Dance Academy for all dancers, whether Amateurs or Professionals, from beginners to top couples. The participants will receive expertise similar to High schools or Universities. Furthermore the Academy will set up franchise partners all over the World.

WJB: In which way you are involved in this Academy?

Donnie: The GOC Steering Committee asked me, to be head of the Latin Branch. As I thought it a wonderful idea with a promising concept, I agreed. Then I talked with Bill Irvine MBE and delivered the concept. I could convince him, that it was an excellent idea, which could serve the dancers of all over the World. After some days of consideration and questions he gave me his ok. You of course realise that the GOC Steering Committee was more than proud and honoured at Bill Irvine's acceptance to run the Ballroom section of the Academy.

WJB: What are the next steps to realise the project?

Donnie: Now we will finalise all necessary contracts. Bill and myself already have made up our plans and are in contact with the most experienced trainers. Only the best will teach in this first and only German Dance Academy in Mannheim.

WJB: When will the Mannheim Dance Academy start?

Donnie: By the end of this year we will publish our schedule of training together with prices and details. At the moment we are setting up the administration and the logistics. The first lectures will be given during the week before next years German Open Championships. In order not to create any problems with the other big International events like Blackpool or Miami, the GOC Steering Committee asked the GOC Organiser to run the next GOC up to 2008 one week earlier. Then Mr. Mauge agreed to do so.

WJB: What will be your offer to your "Students?"

Donnie: We are already contacting Universities to find experts for example in sports medicine, psychology, diets, experts for stamina etc. We want to offer the whole rainbow of colours in competition performances.

WJB: What future plans do you have with the Mannheim Dance Academy?

Donnie: We think, that in future we could set up branches in important Dance Centres such as Beijing, Tokyo and in the United States. We look upon our "pupils" as customers. And we want to serve our customers. The task of our GOC Steering Committee is, to raise the quality of judges and the quality and quantity of participating couples. We must have the best judges and the best structures. So next year we will have one more day for the competitions and we will have a GOC-Night party for all participants. I think that we already can see the result of our work at this year's GOC. We want to bring the eyes of the World on to Mannheim!

Thank you, Donnie Burns for the interview.