

German Open Championships

Part Two : Bryan Allen's and Ann Baker's report continues from Edition 2044

IDSF GRAND SLAM LATIN: The programmed entry of 471 couples produced a final round of eight! It was understandable for there were five couples who seemed to be clearly finalists and the remaining couples all had a chance of taking the remaining opportunity.

The winning couple, Maurizio Vescovo and Melinda Torokgyorgy (Hungary) seemingly had more time than others, always the hallmark of a top quality performance. Filling out the music beautifully, they were quite different, different class, in choreography, timing, and characterisation. In Paso Doble their quality performance lived, not acted the part. They received final placings of 11112.

Runners-up were Stefano Di Filippo and Anna Melnikova (Italy), placed 22221. They were indeed the favourites with the audience to whom they spent most of the time playing to. Their Jive was certainly their best

dance. They have much to commend them but, overall they had too many stops in their choreography, obviously designed for crowd appeal, and at times a flat-footed action was noted.

Alexei Silde and Anna Firstova, (Russia), third in all dances, (fifth last year) have continued to progress. They are clean, refreshing in presentation, and very sound.

The fourth couple, also from Russia, were Andrei Zaitsev and Anna Kuzminskaya who finished fourth in all dances. A fabulous young man but at present he sometimes overshadows his partner.

Zoran Plohl and Tatsiana Lahvinovich (Slovenia) were fifth in all dances. They presented controlled dancing but with a degree of feeling and probably were pleased to have moved up from sixth in 2006.

The remaining three couples were Timo Kulczak and Motoshegets Mabuse (Germany)

a wonderful lady and strong man but he was too solid, isolation required.

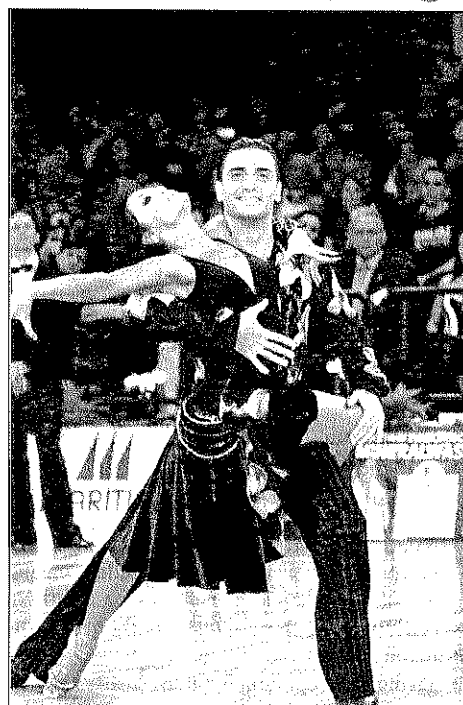
Seventh Nikolay Voronovich and Maria Nikolishina (Russia), clean and expressive but could fill out the music in Rumba a little more.

In eighth place were Emanuele Soldi and Elisa Nasato (Italy), expressive and expansive, accenting the music sharply.

Noted earlier were: Ferdinando Iannaccone and Yulia Musikhina (Italy) a couple that have greatly improved. It was a terrific competition, lots of exciting young couples coming through. In general a serious question has to be asked about the almost total absence of the Chasse action in the Jive!!! Why has it almost disappeared?

SENIOR STANDARD: The seven couple final saw five couples from Italy, one of them the winners. Stefano Bernardini and Stefania Martellini took the title, winning the Waltz surprised me somewhat for although they were strong and had impact they lacked the qualities I thought necessary to defeat the Belgian pair, Slawek Lukawczyk and Edna Klein. Although the runners-up were not quite as free as they were when they won at Blackpool, I thought they were the best in all dances except possibly the Tango and the Quickstep. This result was a reversal of 2006.

Third were Alessandro Brescianini and Annalisa Vitolo full of life but rather stiff.



Left: Winners of the German Open IDSF Grand Slam Amateur Latin, Maurizio Vescovo and Melinda Torokgyorgy. Above: Runners-up, Stefano Di Filippo and Anna Melnikova. Below: Alexei Silde and Anna Firstova, placed third. Photographs by Frédéric Lepretre and Karine Bisson of dance-photos.com France



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Of the remaining four couples I would have thought that the Russians, Vladimir Shcherbakov and Natalia Ovcharenko could easily have been second. It is my opinion that they were possible winners of the Tango and Quickstep. They finished third a year ago and could have easily been in the medal positions. The programmed entry for this event was 268 couples.

YOUTH STANDARD: A fascinating family affair! Two brothers finishing first and second.... **IS THIS A RECORD?** The title was retained by Ivan Novikov and Margarita Klimenko (Russia) defeating his brother, Pavel Novikov and Karolina Iwanowicz, who were listed in the programme as being from Poland. The winners had soft sweeping movement, co-ordination of an exceptional quality. A young Marcus Hilton??? The second couple were so well together so centred and compact. They danced a great Tango.

Third were Davide Mariani and Debora Mancinelli (Italy) who were strong and active but held the elbows too high and dropped the hip line. Daniil Ulanov and Anastasia Glaucoma (Russia) fourth were also guilty of the modern dancing illness of too high, too stiff.

Francesco Galuppo and Debora Pacini (Italy) well together with good foot and ankle usage, finished fifth. Completing this excellent final Georgy Markarian and Anastasia Kuzmina (Russia) could, if softened slightly, finish higher. The 239 programmed entries gave us a wonderful competition So much talent, so much to look forward to in future years.

SPECIAL MENTION: We feel we must highlight the special success of Valery Pavlov and Elizabeth Shibaeva. At this year's German Open Championships this highly talented young Russian pair were placed 4th in the Junior 1 Latin, 1st in the Junior 1 10 Dance, and in the Junior 1 Standard they were not only placed first but also received all the 55 possible 1st placings! Many congratulations to them both and to their teachers.

**PART THREE - CONCLUSION
NEXT WEEK**