

CELEBRATE DANCE! 2016

Toronto

Thank you so much to all the dancers who attended 'Celebrate Dance!' this past weekend. There was a terrific turnout, the largest so far, and everyone came ready to have fun! Many thanks to Cam Gray and Robert Mah who were responsible for laying down the dance floor and then pulling it up at the end of the event, it is a huge undertaking. Judy hired a few young men to help them out and a floor was ready for us to dance in one of the ballrooms on the Thursday evening. Registration opened at 8:30 Friday morning, previews at 9 and workshops at 10. It was full on from that moment until the final hour of open dance with Tina Foster on the Sunday afternoon.

There were three dance rooms to choose from all weekend including a beginner room which was well used, all the instructors taught there at one point. The instructors were terrific. From far afield we had Fred Whitehouse (from Ireland and first time in Canada) who received a standing ovation for his 'homeless' performance at the Saturday Show. Jose Miguel Belloque Vane flew in from The Netherlands for his second visit to Toronto and also impressed with his flowing Waltz performance in the show, check the video when I get it up! Apart from being incredibly talented choreographers, dancers and instructors, they were such personable young men, always with ready smiles and time to chat.

From the US we had John Robinson who I would now count as an honorary Canadian!! He is definitely one of us! It is always a pleasure to have John here in Toronto. Lorenzo Evans was new on the CD! list and dancers enjoyed his funky moves and appealing personality. Having Guyton Mundy here for his final appearance at a Canadian event was bittersweet and after his performance at the Show there were many dancers in tears. We will miss you Guyton but wish you much happiness in the future in whatever you choose to do. To many of the dancers Tina Foster was a new face and with her outgoing personality she did a terrific job of instruction. Popular DJ Jill Babinec brought her own unique style to the DJ booth, teaching stage and dance floor, those of you who were there will know what I mean!!!! I should add here thanks to Eve Yeaton from Chicago who MC'd the previews and the show.

From Canada, Gerard Murphy travelled to Toronto along with a head to toe black outfit with a flowing purple cape to add some flare. I have a feeling it is a good idea he didn't wear it on the flight!! Always a pleasure to see you Gerard!! Fred Buckley DJ'd the morning easy open dance sessions which are very popular and taught in the beginner room with patience and humour. As well as all her other duties, Judy took time to teach classes and give a session on teaching beginners. I also had fun teaching and thanks so very much to all the dancers who packed the floor for my classes, much appreciated. Thanks also to Lynn Warden who kept us dancing at night in the second ballroom.

None of these events, of course, can run smoothly without a lot of help behind the scenes. Donna Laurin worked on registration and other administrative tasks for months ahead of time and was at the registration desk most of the weekend. Sue Rodgers was at the registration desk most of the weekend also and Melissa Adams lent a hand and her high energy! Tina and her husband Irvin were responsible for the decoration and the purple balloons really added to the festive air. Meanwhile Julie Ellis was making sure the staff and volunteers had enough food in them to keep their energy high! Thanks to everyone else who also lent a hand when needed.

Do check out the website and facebook page.. You will find lots of photos on both sites:

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/313673422074064/>

Website: <https://celebratedance.wordpress.com/?p=1869&preview=true>

Dates for next year are **June 22-25, 2017.**