

# Loving the Classic



Alan and I were thrilled to be invited to teach at the Canadian Line Dance Classic in Ontario. Neither of us had been to Canada before so the excitement was palpable as we landed in Toronto late at night. We were welcomed by the very bubbly Judy McDonald and Tina Veliotis who had come to meet us. They both joined in our chatter as we drove to Saint Catharines. They asked us on the way if we would like to go via Niagara Falls? What a hard question that was... OF COURSE! We didn't need to be asked twice. It was a little spooky and dark as we stepped out of the car... and oh so, so cold. Coats wrapped around us, we walked carefully on the frozen ground, it was almost midnight and we couldn't see much at first but the sound was incredible. We managed a few photos before diving back into the car knowing that we would be back to see this frozen spectacle again in daylight.

Arriving more than a whole day before the event gave us a chance to adjust to the time difference, explore the hotel and go for a walk, the sun was shining however low the temperature. In the evening we met two of Judy's dancers Ellen and Cynthia who welcomed us

to gatecrash their game at the hotel's bowling alley.

The event coincided with National LDF day in the UK, an event we always support, so with the help of David Laurin, who dropped us off near the Falls and DJ Aggie, who held the camera, we recorded a message from the frozen Niagara Falls for LDF Manchester and posted it on Facebook. At least we would be there somehow... When we arrived back at the hotel we were thrilled to find a very warm welcome from everyone at our first workshop. And yes everybody soon got used to Alan's 'Bolton' accent. The atmosphere over the weekend was fun and relaxed. There were three workshop rooms running simultaneously and we taught dances of all levels and genres.

It was an honour to be part of this fun loving team, dancing with dancers from Canada and USA. Nothing beats dancing great classic dances with their choreographers... 'After Midnight' with Judy McDonald, 'The Way' with Gerard Murphy (thanks for the extra help Gerard!) 'Backstreet Attitude' with Jamie Marshall... and we won't forget in a hurry the buzz of enthusiasm from

those dancing 'Wave On Wave' and 'Somebody Like You' with Alan. It was also lovely to share the floor with Rhoda Lai who is so amazing to watch, catch up with Mark Cosenza and Donna Laurin who we first met in Tampa, join in 'Shades Of Passion' with Tina Foster and also a pleasure to meet Joey Prieur, DJ Aggie Aggmar and 'Keepin' It Country' DJ Lynn Warden.

So many people helped to make this event such a success and an experience we will never forget. We danced, we taught, we sang, we laughed and we had fun with the amazing CLDC Team and some very enthusiastic dancers. We know that such an easy going atmosphere does not come naturally. The hard work that goes on behind the scenes is the only reason events like these run as smoothly as they do.

We had five days to find out more about the amazing place we were visiting. So first we enjoyed a whole day at Niagara Falls where the temperature remained well below zero even in the sunshine. The US Falls covered in snow and ice were amazing but the Canadian Falls were absolutely stunning. We were so

Alan Birchall and Jacqui Jax recently enjoyed a classic adventure in Canada, courtesy of Judy McDonald who invited them to be part of the CLDC team in Ontario. From the warm welcome at Toronto airport to the amazing event, everything made this Classic unforgettable. Jacqui tells us more.



cold and covered in freezing flakes of ice from the mist that by the time we reached the top of the Falls, my fringe (which had escaped from my thermal hat) froze to my eye lashes and I couldn't blink. Close by was the Skylon Tower which took us 800 feet above the Maid of the Mist pool. I have never experienced temperatures like these and it was only possible to stay outside at the top for short periods at a time. Taking our gloves off to take photos was also done very quickly too.

Next stop was Toronto where for the first couple of days we wondered how we were going to survive walking around in this marshmallow world of ice and frost. Then we discovered an underground world of shopping malls and food courts, where you could literally spend the whole day without seeing daylight. It has to be experienced to be believed!

Top of the 'to do' list next and highly recommended was lunch at CN TOWER, the world's tallest tower. The glass lift (aka elevator) whizzed us up the outside of the tower to a revolving 360° restaurant in the sky. While we ate our gourmet lunch we enjoyed ever changing views of Toronto and Lake Ontario as the

restaurant moved slowly round full circle before the clouds came down and blocked everything. The large glass floor on the observation deck was scary, however safe it is touted to be. After a lot of persuasion and hyperventilating (me that is) we both walked 'quickly' across... as I was recovering Alan said we had to go back over it just to prove (to ourselves) that we had done it. I didn't look down.

And don't the Canadians love our Queen! 'Queen VICTORIA' is the very impressive oval-shaped Queen's Park full of trees and monuments bordering 'Old Toronto', and they get very excited

about their castle 'Casa Loma' which we caught a brief glimpse of after all the 'up to 80 floors high' buildings. After all, our hotel room was on the 23rd floor and that was high enough for me.

To finish it all we managed a glass of Champagne at Tiffany's, a meal at Hard Rock Cafe and a visit to the Theatre to see 'Once' on our last night. All in all, the perfect ending to our amazing ten days in beautiful, awe-inspiring and jaw-dropping Canada.

*Love Jacqui Jax*

## Once Workshop Dances:

**Listen To The Music** (Intermediate – released at event)

**Snow In Vegas** (Improver – released at event)

**A Dance With No Name** (Advanced)

**Powerful Stuff** (Intermediate)

**Pointless** (Intermediate)

**Human-Dancer** (Intermediate)