



# STEPPING OUT

This month, **Marianka Swain** shares a showdance opportunity and looks forward to the Same Sex Open

**T**wo-time European champion showdance team Guyz in Sync have another title in their sights as they prepare for the new Same Sex Dance World Championship, held during the Outgames in Antwerp, Belgium next August. "It's really exciting," says Heather Gladding, the team's co-founder. "The competition is organised by the recently formed International Federation of Same Sex Dance Associations, which includes representatives from Europe and America, so this is the most prestigious, far-reaching title yet."

Guyz in Sync are looking for new male dancers to join their campaign – and formation experience isn't a prerequisite, explains Heather: "The most important thing is commitment. We have a monthly five-hour rehearsal in Islington and weekly evening sessions, though that increases as we near competition. We're a close-knit, supportive group that makes decisions together – and has a lot of fun together! – so we want people willing to be part of a team. It's a great chance to try something different, and you can do it alongside

a competitive partnership.

"Same-sex showdance is different to mainstream formation – it's a complete, theatrical performance. Our routines require technique, pattern making, musicality, awareness of others and presentation, so it improves your timing, control and



confidence immensely. We also introduce ballroom to different audiences, so we use traditional elements in an entertaining package; we brought in a West End *Chicago* choreographer to help us with a Fosse-inspired piece, and we've performed at events like *MOVE IT* and on Sky1's *Got To Dance*."

There are no limits for prospective joiners: "Any age, height, look and sexuality. It doesn't matter if you normally lead or follow; you can stick with what you know or try swapping. We sometimes switch lead within routines, which requires great skill – and gives you new appreciation for what your partner does!" Visit [www.guyzinsync.co.uk](http://www.guyzinsync.co.uk) or email [info@guyzinsync.co.uk](mailto:info@guyzinsync.co.uk) if you're interested in joining.

**G**et in the competitive spirit by heading to the Winter Gardens' Spanish Hall in Blackpool on October 27 for the city's first-ever same-sex ballroom competition (*poster pictured below*). With dancers from all over the world already signed up, including current male and

female European champions, the standard promises to be high, and the starry judging panel includes *Strictly* winner Matthew Cutler. It's a weekend of social dancing too, with a welcome event on October 26 and a Pink Jukebox-led social on October 28.

"Blackpool is the Mecca for ballroom dancers and we can't think of a better place to be," says co-organiser Bradley Stauffer-Kruse. "We hope this is the start of an annual competition running alongside the city's other wonderful festivals."

Visit [www.samesexopen.co.uk](http://www.samesexopen.co.uk) for more information and to buy tickets. The organisers are on the lookout for more local volunteers, so if you want to get involved, email [info@samesexopen.co.uk](mailto:info@samesexopen.co.uk). We'll bring you a full report on the competition in our December issue. ●

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