



STEPPING OUT

This month, **Marianka Swain** talks to Sören and Bradley Stauffer-Kruse about “Britain’s Got Talent” and a new competition

With over 100,000 YouTube hits and an outpouring of adulation, it’s safe to say that the Sugar Dandies, AKA Sören and Bradley Stauffer-Kruse, made quite a debut on ITV’s “Britain’s Got Talent” – and their experience helped them deal with the pressure of this big stage.

They explain: “One of the wonderful things about being a competitive ballroom dancer is that it teaches you to stand in front of judges and give your best. Waiting backstage, hearing those terrible buzzers, you do think to yourself, ‘What will they make of us?’, but we tried to be calm and show the audience that we take our dancing very seriously.”

Auditioning in front of a 1,700-strong crowd unfamiliar with same-sex ballroom was a brave move, “and there was some laughter at the beginning, but we felt the mood turn from sceptical to genuinely moved. People started to sway with the music and we got a standing ovation at the end. Watching the programme, seeing the judges’ faces change as we danced, was the most meaningful part – they really came to appreciate our love for dancing and for each other.”

However, the couple were astonished by the subsequent reaction: “The producers tried to prepare us for the flood of messages we’d receive, but we were totally overwhelmed! We’d like to thank everyone for their kind words and ask the dance community to stick with us as we progress to the next stage. We hope our participation will help make same-sex couples a more usual sight in mainstream dancing – one day, maybe we’ll even see them on ‘Strictly!’”

Sören and Bradley have also been a key part of another project – the creation of a new Blackpool ballroom competition, the Same-Sex Open (www.samesexopen.co.uk), which takes place on October 27. “The town’s very encouraging, so it’s the perfect place for the first major same-sex competition outside London, and dancing at the Winter Gardens will be a very special experience.

“It’ll be run under UK Same Sex Dance Council rules and we’ll have show dances and general dancing, as well the main competition. We’ve already had a great response from British and international competitors and we hope to interest gay and lesbian spectators from Blackpool and the surrounding area. Our main ambition is to make this a world-class competition and a highlight in the same-sex dance calendar for years to come.”

We’ll bring you more details on the Same-Sex Open in future issues. Before that, many British couples are heading to Hungary for the EuroGames on June 28–30. Interested competitors and spectators can find more information at www.eurogamesbudapest.hu/sports/dance or on the EuroGames 2012 Facebook page. ●



Sören and Bradley Stauffer-Kruse on “Britain’s Got Talent”

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