



STEPPING OUT

This month, **Marianka Swain** reports on the Pink Jukebox Trophy

The 16th annual Pink Jukebox Trophy (PJT) saw new champions, returning favourites and excellent results for British couples, cheered on by a home crowd at London's Rivoli Ballroom on February 16.

As one of the longest-running and most prestigious same-sex ballroom competitions in the world, the PJT always boasts a strong turnout and closely fought contests, but this year was particularly exciting, recalls Jacky Logan, who, with Ralf Schiller and Mary White, kept the event running like clockwork. "Sadly, the defending men's champions in both ballroom and Latin couldn't participate because of injury, but this meant new couples coming through.

"Frank Demi-Travail and Auke Jambe Enschede from the Netherlands triumphed in the men's A ballroom, and the UK's Lemington Ridley and Nejc Jus narrowly beat Pascal Herrbach and Gilles Hoxer, from Germany and Denmark respectively, to win the Latin."

There was a shock result in the women's A Latin, with popular Hungarian couple Beatrix Recsisovszki and Reka Fuleki, PJT runners-up in 2011 and European champions, failing to make the

final. Denmark's Camilla Johnson and N Jorgensen took the title, but faced a strong challenge from emerging British contenders.

The women's A ballroom was business as usual, with Germany's Caroline Privou and Petra Zimmerman retaining their title for the 11th year running, though the high standard made it one of the most spectacular finals.

However, it wasn't just the top dancers who caught the crowd's imagination, notes Jacky: "The PJT has a reputation for being incredibly welcoming and this year was no exception. We had 93 couples competing, and the room erupted with applause for dancers at all levels."

Nicola Klug had a rather unusual competitive experience that illustrates this inclusive ethos. Her partner was stranded in Berlin when her flight was cancelled, but Nicola met British dancer Kerry Tite while queuing up outside the Rivoli and several people encouraged them to join forces. Not only did this scratch partnership compete, they came fourth in the women's B ballroom. Also taking a leap of faith were French dancer Dominique Arnaud and Brit Sue Knox, who impressively won the women's D Latin.

Jacky was thrilled that the adjudication panel included Janet Clark, "who judged our very first PJT in 1999", as well as newcomer Brenda Bishop. Brenda praised the system of observing all couples before placing them in different levels, according to ability, not age, "which means you're not watching the same couples again and again in each age group. I think this should be adopted in some mainstream competitions! It was a wonderful day and so nice to see a competition where the fun of dancing really comes across."

That fun continued during the post-competition party, where Jacky observed top competitors happily partnering beginners – "and nearly everybody was dancing with someone from a different country!" Brenda loved this sense of community, adding: "The mainstream competitions should be made more open for these couples to compete. This is how dancing should be, not for just one type of person. Dancing is for everybody."

Registration is now open for France's leading same-sex dancesport competition, Le Gais Musette, taking place on May 17–20. See <http://en.paris-tournament.com> for more information. ●



Men's A ballroom champions Frank Demi-Travail and Auke Jambe Enschede