

STEPPING OUT

THE SAME-SEX
DANCE SCENE



Marianka Swain reports on May's German Open Championships in Düsseldorf

“**T**he competition has, in the past, seemed exclusive to German dancers,” says **Tori Settle**, who, with partner **Yvonne**, came third in women's Senior B ballroom. “That's not the case now, and we felt very welcomed.”

The British contingent impressed, including two couples formed on the day: **Heather Devine** and **Simone Britz** came first in women's C Latin, **Jacky Logan** and **Melani Duranic** third. In A ballroom, **Heather** won bronze with **Chris Lyons**, while in men's, **Thorston Dreyer** and **Benedikt Kraus** came sixth.

Heather enjoyed the open marking, which allowed them to see their third placings in each style along the way. “After the Viennese,

we could just relax and enjoy the last two dances.”

Caroline Privou and **Petra Zimmermann** retained their A ballroom title, closely followed by fellow Germans **Claudia Reger** and **Raphaella Edeler**. The latter “looked like a Disney princess in classification, with her long, loose hair, but she pinned it up for the final,” recalls **Heather**. “**Miriam Meister** and **Angela Pikarski** (*pictured*) were delighted to be placed in A, and doubly delighted to win through a tough semi-final. As a result, they took the ten-dance title for the first time.”

In men's A ballroom, victorious Germans **Christian Roman Wenzel** and **Pascal Herrbach** donned striking

costumes that accentuated their flowing movement. “**Pascal** is the best male follower I've seen, but they still swapped lead to good effect,” observes **Heather**. Third-placed leader **Christian Seitz** recently switched from dancing with a woman; his former partner placed second in women's B ballroom.

Gilles Hoxer and **Esben Weiergang** from Denmark romped home in men's A Latin, winning every dance, while energetic Germans **Marina Hüls** and **Nadine Wolff** topped the

women's. Identically styled runners-up **Evelyn Krosta** and **Susannah Havermann** took an unusually egalitarian approach, notes **Heather**, rather than following the “strong leader/sexy follower dynamic we've taken from mainstream ballroom”.

Tori enjoyed the typically superb German organisation and socialising at the Gala Ball, but her personal highlight came in one of the ballroom rounds. “For reasons unknown to us non-German speakers, two top couples ended up in a heat on their own.

There's a bitter rivalry between them, and the resulting tango was outstanding; I could feel the hairs on the back of my neck standing up!” Appropriate for what **Tori** hails as, with the exception of **EuroGames**, “the most competitive same-sex event in Europe”. ●

