

# Q&A: RACHID MALKI

The recently retired Swedish professional Latin competitor talks to **Marianka Swain** about leaving the floor and embracing new opportunities

## Why did you decide to stop?

My partner Anna [Suprun] and I talked about it for some time, and it just felt like we'd reached that point. We've dedicated so many years to competition, practising all hours to maintain that level, and it's time to try new projects. It's not easy, though. We will miss it.

## Were you surprised so many couples retired with you?

Definitely! We knew one couple was retiring, and we heard Michael [Malitowski] and Joanna [Leunis] might. But all four Latin couples leaving at once – us, Michael and Joanna, Jurij and Jagoda [Batagelj], and Andrej [Skufca] and Melinda [Torokgyorgy] – that made it really special. It was an event.

## Did you think about how you wanted to say your farewells?

Yes, we decided to do something different. Instead of Marcus reading out a letter, we thought it would be nice to have something in the programme people could take away and read.

## Is it a big adjustment?

It's difficult, after so many years – all of a sudden we don't have it anymore. But it's not the end. We can still practise and perform, so it's goodbye to competition, not to dancing.

## Did you achieve what you wanted to?

I'm happy to finish now. We got great results, and we did it all by ourselves – that's a big achievement for

a couple from a small country. There are no regrets.

## What are your plans now?

We're really excited about developing our dance studio in Croydon, GlamDance, where we're going to be teaching. It's great to be able to share our knowledge and experience with other couples, particularly on the technical side. Many dancers lack technical skills – they

take a lot of lessons, but they don't have the fundamentals to base their dancing on. Also, Anna has always designed her own amazing dresses, and she's now taking orders from others. So we're definitely still a part of the dance world – I hope for many years to come. ●

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Rachid Malki with partner Anna Suprun at the International in 2013

