

# Ballroom's back, thanks to reality TV

*Competitive dance so popular it's now in running to become Olympic medal sport*

By DYRARENE CANICULA

**B**allroom dancing is fast becoming the new Macarena in Vancouver because of popular reality TV shows like Dancing with the Stars and Ballroom Bootcamp.

The UBC Dance Club has had an increase of 100 new members in the last couple months said Moncia Chan, external vice-president of the UBC Dance Club. Most of them heard about ballroom dancing on TV Chan said.

"Reality TV shows help promote dance and it really brings the aspect of work and dedication we put into the sport," she said.

At a competitive level, ballroom dancing is called dancesport. The most recent international competition, the SnowBall Classic, took place Feb. 2 to 6 at River Rock Casino in Richmond.

The competition was attended by 4,500 people and is one of the largest of its kind in North America. World champion couples along with 300 dancers from all over the world competed.

The International DanceSport Federation, the governing body of dancesport, is vying for dance to be considered an Olympic sport. Competitive dance is currently short-listed for consideration as a medal sport for the Olympic Summer Games.

Jim Fraser, chairman of the IDSF legal commission, said there is immense pressure on the National Olympic Committees from lots of other sports to get into the Olympic program.

"The bus is full and if anyone else wants to get on, someone has to get off," said Fraser.

Chan agrees that dancesport should be considered an Olympic event.

"Doing a quickstep is like a 100-metre dash," she said.

Dancers work harder because they have to "incorporate smiling, looking gorgeous and not stepping on [their] partner's foot," into their routine.

Brian Dudley, a ballroom veteran of

14 years and president of DanceSport B.C., said that dancesport exceeds the expectations people have of Olympic sports.

"The 100-metre dash doesn't involve music, it doesn't involve people working together... you just don't get the same level of excitement you get with dancesport," said Dudley.

He said dance is a passion with so many compelling human aspects. You feel the energy, you hear the music, and then you feel the emotion, the vibrancy, and the excitement.

However, dancing is not all glitz and glory. Costumes cost anywhere from \$200 to \$700 and private lessons, mandatory if you want to compete, can cost twice as much.

Kurt Preinsperg, a philosophy instructor at Langara, bowed out gracefully from the dance floor after 10 years of dancing.

In a recent Toastmaster's speech, he said, "Ballroom dancing has added immensely to my happiness, in spite of its pitfalls - or perhaps even because of them. Navigating pitfalls skillfully can itself become an exhilarating challenge."

Emotional entanglement, competitiveness, and perfectionism are some of the downsides of dance according to Preinsperg.

However, he added dance gives people "the pleasure of moving to music, healthful exercise, release of tension, escape from boredom, easy gregariousness and opportunities for romance."

If people are looking for opportunities for dance or romance there are many options around Vancouver.

The UBC Dance Club offers beginners lessons three times a week for a membership fee of \$150.

A number of ballrooms and dinner clubs near Commerical Drive also offer lessons and the opportunity to practice.

Astorino's Hall at 1739 Venables St. offers drop in lessons every Sunday and Tuesday for five dollars.

## DANCE etiquette



### HYGIENE

If you notice your partner is holding their breath and bending over backwards. Take a hint and eat a mint.

Avoid strong cologne and perfume. At such close quarters it's a health hazard and will make your partner woozy.

### TIPS FOR WOMEN

Don't clutch your partners arm too tight, you'll leave marks, especially if you have long nails.

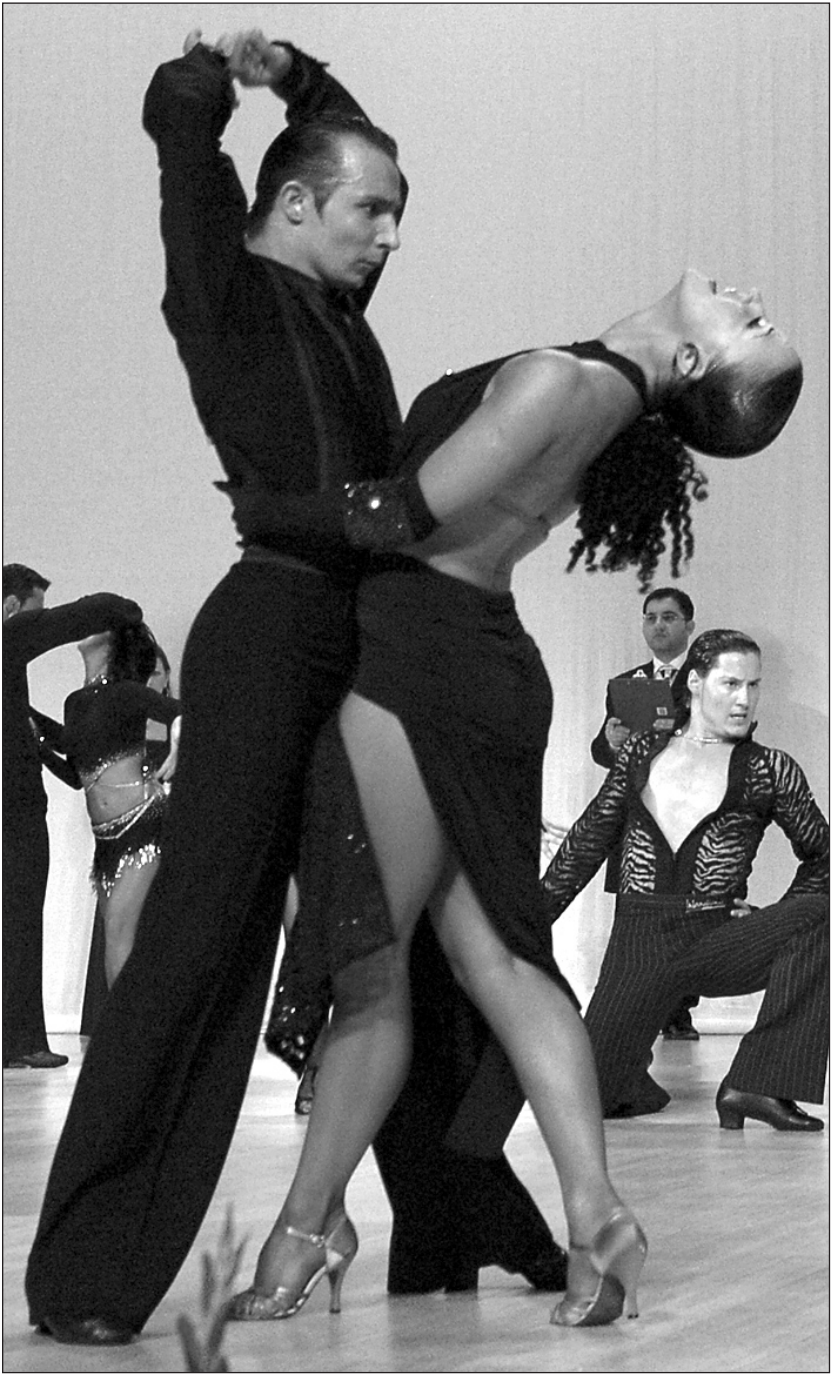
Support the weight of your arms and body or your partner will exhaust himself dragging you across the floor.

### TIPS FOR MEN

Lead with confidence. Your partner doesn't know where to go otherwise.

However, avoid barking orders or flinging your partner around with abandon.

Avoid wandering hands and indiscreet stares. Lecherous behaviour and advances aren't cool.



DYRARENE CANICULA photo

Maurizio Vescovo and Melinda Torokgyorgy of Hungary dance their way to a second place win in the latin championship at the SnowBall Classic.

# Look out! 2006 is Year of the Dodge

*Playground sport has gotten so adult it has own league and championship*

By MELISSA SERRAGLIO

**T**his will be the year of the "dodge", the year dodgeball will be put on the map, according to an executive for the growing Vancouver Dodgeball League.

Jeff Mesina, public relations and marketing executive for the VDL, believes the sport is on the rise and catching on in Vancouver.

The skills needed to play are simple, he said.

"As long as you can pick a ball up and throw it, you can play dodgeball," Mesina said. "And you better know how to dodge."

Players try to eliminate members of the opposing team by hitting them with a ball or catching their throws. Headshots are not allowed.

Mesina believes that there aren't any organized dodgeball teams in high schools because the sport cannot compete with the prestige of major sports leagues.

"There are professional leagues for hockey and football," said Mesina. "Kids growing up wanting to get into sports where they can be an athlete people look up to."

Interest in the Vancouver Dodgeball League, however, continues to grow.

In two years, the league has such an overflow of teams wanting to participate that some had to be waitlisted.

The non-profit league was created for different groups of people to meet new friends and get out and enjoy life, said Mesina.

It is also a way to give back to the community, as VDL executives are working to put together various charity events.

All the while, participants are enjoying some healthy competition.

"You can get an athletic person playing against someone who is a novice in dodgeball," said Mesina. "And it'll still be a good match between them."

The VDL held its second dodgeball tournament on Feb. 4 which had a large turnout of participants.

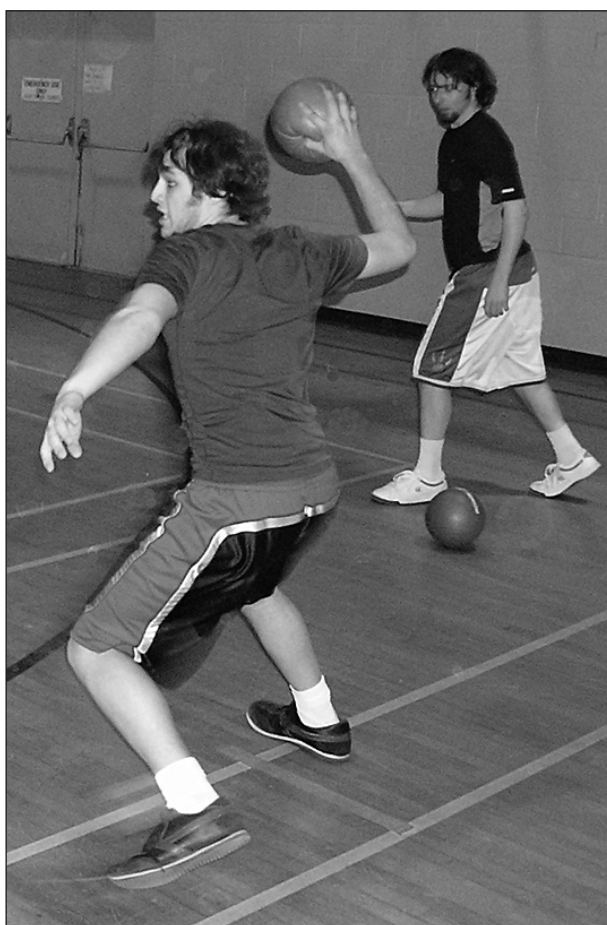
The winning team was handed a championship belt, and there were also awards for the MVP and the most sportsmanlike team of the tournament.

To foster good spirit teams are encouraged to play in costume.

New player Christopher McDonald tried dodgeball for the first time at the tournament and said he really enjoyed the atmosphere.

"The tournament was well-organized and I was impressed by the sportsmanship of all the teams," McDonald said. "I'd definitely recommend it for a Saturday night."

While dodgeball is often not taken seriously, Mesina warned people not to laugh at the game, saying, "don't judge a book by its cover."



MELISSA SERRAGLIO photo

A member of the Vancouver Dodgeball League winds up a throw during the second championship.

# Badminton men's pair net the gold

By DYRARENE CANICULA

**T**he Langara Falcons basketball and badminton teams faced triumph and upset at last weekend's tournaments.

In badminton, Adrian Liu and Derrick Ng brought home the gold in men's doubles in the second of three banner tournaments running up to British Columbia Colleges' Athletic Association championship.

Langara College has placed second in both tournaments and has a total of 164 team points, trailing Douglas College by 55.

Coach Colin Ng said the team could do better with more players. A couple of players could not play in January for personal reasons he said.

The final banner tournament is happening this weekend. The team took home the BCCAA championship last year.

The women's basketball team ended a five game winning streak and lost 51-52 to Columbia Bible College on Friday. But the team got it together and won 63-42 against CBC on Saturday.

The men's basketball team fared better and netted both games against CBC. The men's team is currently ranked third in the Fraser Valley.