



Stephien Takata & Joanna Mielnick (CO)
Senior II Silver, Gold Smooth, 1st, Senior III Silver, Gold Smooth, 1st



Jon Hamilton & Dawbina Hara (OK)
Teacher/Student, Adult Bronze Rhythm, 2nd, Novice/mer Cha Cha, 1st

4th Annual Competition

KANSAS CITY DANCE CLASSIC

HIGH ENERGY, ATTRACTS 'LOTS OF KIDS', NEW TEACHER-STUDENT DIVISIONS

By Deanna Dikeman
All Photos by Deanna Dikeman

The fourth annual Kansas City Dance Classic on Sept. 10 was bigger and better than ever, with 165 dancers competing in 178 heats in 402 competitive events, at the Camelot Ballroom in Overland Park, KS.

Matt and Ellen Pansing, USA Dance athletes themselves, started KCDC in 2013,

creating a USA Dance "Registered" competition in the middle of the country, where none had existed before.

Teacher/Student competition was new this year and was more than 25 percent of the 917 entries. It added excitement with a bigger audience, fuller heats, and thus more couples to watch. The judges were busier too.

Jay Rhea, a teacher from Tulsa, OK, danced with two students. Jay was happy

to have a competition closer to home. His student, Kim Knutson, said that she was one of 10 students from Tulsa who came to dance with their teachers, along with four others who were dancing as amateur couples. "Amateur couples who had been here last year told us about the new teacher/student heats," she said. Twenty professionals in all registered to compete with their students.

What else was new and brought more energy this year? Lots of kids dancing. Stephanie Kong, a Kansas City area ballroom teacher and former amateur competitor, brought 18 dancers, ranging from five to 15 years old. For 12 of them, it was their first time competing. Helena Scherbinin, age 12, was a leader for five dances and followed in five. Helena spoke about her first competition: "I was nervous at first, but then I relaxed and enjoyed it. I was surprised to have adults dancing on the floor at the same time. Also, I made a few mistakes and still ended up getting first place."

Shane Gadberrry and Vicki Wells traveled from Dallas, TX for the third year in a row. Shane said, "We go all over the country, to about seven comps a year. Kansas City is the funnest." Vicki added, "There's no pressure, they run it right, it's all in one day which makes it economical, and the dance floor and facility are great." Then Shane smiled and proclaimed, "Plus, we get to eat great Kansas City barbecue." Both agreed that the level of competition this year was tougher. "Which is a good thing," they said.

Ian Redmont and Hisako Matsuo, from St. Louis, MO, returned to compete this year. They dance Championship-level International Ballroom and Latin, so their heats were small or uncontested at Kansas City. But they didn't mind: "We like coming here, and we're using the floor time to get ready for the Carolina Fall Classic NQE, where we're going in a few weeks." ☺

Emcee – Pete Modica
Chairman of Adjudicators – Dan Calloway
Sponsorships – \$1,600 (12 donors)
Next KCDC – Sept. 9, 2017



Pre-Ten To Junior Awards Ceremony: Yelisy Romanov, Paige Schmidberger, Anna Scheherbinin, David Sorokin, Violette Witt (all from MO)



Michael McGinnis & Marisa Sanders (KS)
Teacher/Student Bronze Youth Rhythm, Swing, 1st, TS Junior Bronze Swing, Rumba Cha Cha, 1st



Clay Mitchell & Ali Ball (MO)
Adult Silver Rhythm, Mambo, 1st



Kyle Oberkrom & Jamie Dwyler (MO)
Adult Bronze Smooth, 3rd, Adult Silver Smooth, 4th