



## Berkeley Beginners' Competition

By Megan Lung  
Contributing Writer

For most people at Berkeley, the first question posed to any ballroom dancer, is "Why?" People have always admired dancing in TV shows and movies like *Dancing with the Stars*, or *Shall We Dance?*, but few actively pursue this hobby. Participation in UCBD asks rookies to put in 6-8 hours of dance practice each week, more than almost any other club. With pressure from schoolwork and jobs, one wonders what drives so many of Berkeley's finest to make this commitment?

For most of us in ballroom, the desire to dance started as a spark of interest, a small flame nurtured by watching spectacular showcases, feeding us hope that one day, we too could look that amazing. Whether it was from dance lessons in our childhood, a glimmer of interest in our high school days, or even being

dragged on by our friends, all of us in UCBD committed ourselves to ballroom, and to experiencing the fear and excitement of participating in the year's first competition.

Hosted by UCBD, the annual Berkeley Beginners' Competition brought together dancers from all over the bay

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Image courtesy of Pavel Masek

Intermediate dancers Larry Liu and partner Naz Pournaghshband at the Beginners' Competition.

## See the Team in these Upcoming Events

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| - February 21, 2009<br>Berkeley Ballroom Classic<br>Berkeley, CA<br><a href="http://ucbd.org/classic/">http://ucbd.org/classic/</a> | } - April 18th, 2009<br>USA Dance NorCal Spring Fling<br>Oakland, CA<br><a href="http://www.usabda-norcal.org/">http://www.usabda-norcal.org/</a> | } - April 25, 2009<br>Stanford Cardinal Classic<br>Stanford, CA<br><a href="http://cardinalclassic.sbd.org/">http://cardinalclassic.sbd.org/</a> | } ...and many<br>more at<br><a href="http://ucbd.org">ucbd.org</a> |
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Image courtesy of Pavel Masek

Beginner dancers Francisco Quiroz with his partner Claire Abu-Assal, and Roy Sun with his partner Anna Yung

## 2008 Cal State Competition

**By Vivien Tsao**

*Contributing Writer*

An unusual sight greeted anyone who passed by Clark Kerr on the morning of November 8, 2008. In front of the dormitory complex amid the hazy backdrop typical of an indecisive Berkeley morning, a group of students milled about, identical in their gleaming, gelled hairdos and sleepy, half-lidded eyes. Some took the time to affix decorations to their coifs and others seized the chance to finish a hurried breakfast while waiting for the bus. These early birds would soon arrive at Just Dance Ballroom in Oakland for the UC Ballroom Dancers (UCBD) rookies' first away competition. Located in industrial Oakland, Just Dance Ballroom hosted the annual California State DanceSport Championships (CalState), an event open to ballroom newcomers

as well as experienced competitors. From young dancers with seemingly boundless energy to stately senior dancers, CalState caters to every age and skill level in its morning-to-night event.

Each year, UCBD attends CalState, allowing rookies to test their proficiency against others and to see older dancers perform as well. As usual, first to compete were the rookies. Nervous excitement, evident in the rookies' occasional mistakes, quickly dissipated with the encouragement of older UCBD members who were quick to cheer on the newcomers. During each heat splashes of pink, dashes of green and a myriad of other colors twirled around the ballroom to the tempo of the current dance. The judges scrutinized the dancers as they made quick marks on electronic devices deciding which couples they wished to call back. As the day

progressed, the dancing improved as intermediate dancers and advanced dancers faced their events. Not only did the technique of these more experienced students provide a model for rookies to follow, they also introduced new dances for rookies to learn. Yet the evening session of open competition, which featured the talents of the best performers, proved the most exciting. Decked in glittering, colorful costumes, dancers, young and old, amazed the audience with their routines and elicited appreciative cheers for their performances. From waltz to paso doble, the open competition dancers entranced the spectators to the very last dance. Filled with admiration for the skill of the competitors—and perhaps greater ambitions toward their own performances, members of the UCBD team, with fifteen hours of dance competition finished and with hair slightly askew, finally left Just Dance Ballroom to return to UC Berkeley.



Image courtesy of Pavel Masek

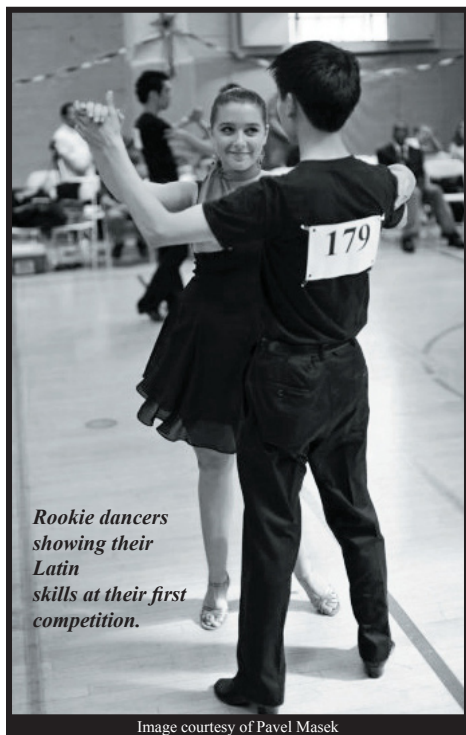
Dancesport Assistant Nicholas Matlis and Publicity Coordinator Casey Palmer

# UCBD Annual Dance Camp

By Ashley Shatola  
Contributing Writer

On the morning of November 15, 2008 the UC Berkeley Ballroom Dance team gathered for its third annual Dance Camp. This sunny morning turned into a fun-filled day of professionally taught classes ranging from the elegant Waltz to the flirty Cha Cha. Professional dance instructors Tomas Atkocevicious, Christine Belanger, Aira Bubnelyte, Silke Miller, Roberta Sun, and Glenn Weiss were among those who led the classes, imparting their knowledge and technique to the team.

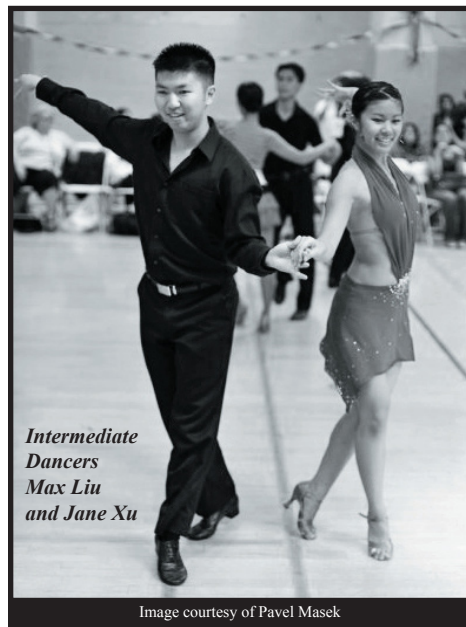
Dance Camp began at 9am and went until 6pm with forty-five minute sessions of instruction followed by thirty minute sessions of practice, and a lunch break in between. During the day Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced dancers practiced independently and with their partners, under the guidance of instructors to find ways to help



Rookie dancers showing their Latin skills at their first competition.

Image courtesy of Pavel Masek

improve their technique and posture. The Rookies bonded as they practiced the bouncing appearance of Jive in a workout fashion, while learning when and how to breathe during the dance. For Latin the Beginner



Intermediate Dancers  
Max Liu  
and Jane Xu

Image courtesy of Pavel Masek

dancers worked on perfecting the settling action key to both Cha Cha and the Rumba. For the Standard dances the dancers practiced posture, the outside partner twist in the upper body, and common mistakes that beginner dancers make. The Intermediate dancers learned new moves and technique that would take them away from being Beginners and turn them into more sophisticated dancers. When the turn came for the Advanced dancers to take the floor for their class, they tried their best to master the stunning and incredibly difficult moves that mesmerized those watching. By the end of the Dance Camp all dancers found they had new techniques and moves to practice that could take them to the next level in ballroom dancing. Overall Dance Camp was a fun and successful crash course in Ballroom Dancing for its participants.

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area to show each other what they had learned this past year. While daunting at times, as this was the first time many of us had danced competitively, it was also an unforgettable experience both in the valuable lessons we learned, and in the adrenaline of performing our very best for all the world to see.

There were mixed sentiments from the rookies following the first competition. Some, like me, took the cuts and callbacks too seriously, while others had fun whether or not they got called back. This was all forgotten, however, when the intermediate dancers entered the dance floor. As a rookie myself, I watched; eyes glazed, mouth open as our teachers tore up the dance floor. Previous insecurities from our own competition faded away as we watched dance after dance, wowed by their endurance and confidence, and above all, by how a guy could sweat such that his number couldn't even stay on his back.

I found said dancer after the last dance massaging a cramp in his leg. It wasn't the sweat or the torn number from his back that was most noticeable or memorable. It was his tired, ragged grin of dances well danced and the energy he put into it. And that was all I needed to think, "Okay, I can do better. In fact, I will do a lot better." I left my first ballroom competition, feet sore, toes cramped, blisters throbbing, and ready for my next dance class.

# A year in Review



Image courtesy of Pavel Masek

*(above)* Former UCBD Dancers Donovan Sung and Dianna Lee perform a showcase at the Berkeley Beginners' Competition.

*(middle)* Advanced dancers Paul Gorelick and Jennifer Chang at the Cal State Championships.

*(far right)* A rookie couple takes the floor to dance the Waltz at Berkeley Beginners' Competition.



Image courtesy of Pavel Masek

*We would like to thank the contributors of 2008 for your generous donations, which have helped to make Berkeley Ballroom a success!*

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Image courtesy of Pavel Masek

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