

Circle Dancing Magic with Lesley Laslett

Central Scotland Circle Dance

And so we began and the familiar strains of 'Love Is' wafted out across the circle. Lesley was leading us in with this oh so gentle dance.

Central Scotland Circle Dance was delighted to be welcoming Lesley and her friend Hilary to Sauchie, near Stirling, for Lesley's first visit to teach in Scotland. For many of the dancers taking part, Sauchie is their dancing home, but others had travelled longer distances from Auchterarder, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Cupar in Fife and across Central Scotland.

Our circle of 30 dancers had been eagerly awaiting this special day and for most, although they were very familiar with her name and dances, had never before danced with Lesley.

Lesley's first dance on her programme was 'Afroditi', a beautiful Greek waltz, which was an excellent choice to take us gently into our day of dancing.

'Den tha Dakristo', a progressive partner dance followed next, which gave us all chance to greet each other and at the same time enjoy the lovely swirly movements that we'd seen Lesley show us in her demonstration.

For the next dance, we had instructions to waft and wave our way to the Pacific, for 'Hawaiian Dreams'. This evoked images of blue skies and sun-kissed beaches, with maidens in grass skirts swaying under the palms. This image was further enhanced with our beautiful centre piece of blue sea waves and white shells that Keryn had created for us. Lesley too, looked just the picture of an Hawaiian dancer with her pale blue skirt which softly folded into layered drapes around her.

We were whisked off to a wedding next for the delightful gypsy Greek dance 'Dalaras Hassapiko', sung by Lesley's favourite singer, George Dalaras. A comment from across the circle from an enquiry about George, told us that George is Greece's answer to Tom Jones.

We went back to the sea again for 'Mesogios' which translates as the Mediterranean and Lesley had certainly captured the freedom of the waves with grapevines that took us in both directions and also turned us out to face the wall and then swiftly back again.

By complete contrast, we were Russian dancers next as we danced 'Posidala Baba' in

an open circle. This was a great opportunity for everyone to let off steam and indulge in some ritual stamping but at the same time we could appreciate the elegance of the Russian steps as Lesley spiralled us all around the room.

After another touch of the exotic with 'Malaysian Calypso', we were transported off to a harem and instructed by Lesley to be 'alluring and sexy' as in parts of the dance, we covered our eyes with our hands as we gracefully twirled to the mystic strains of the 'Gates of Istanbul.'



We finished our morning of dancing with the Maori lullaby 'Hine-e-Hine', sung beautifully by Hayley Westenra. This was a delightful way to close a morning of exhilarating and uplifting dancing.

After lunch Lesley opened the afternoon session with 'Amazing Grace', a simple side cross and two sways and such a lovely gentle way to ease us back again after a delicious and filling shared lunch. It was a wonderful joy to return again to dances that we had learnt in the morning. Now our feet knew exactly what to do and our arms and bodies could freely join in and fully experience the true magic of dancing with Lesley.

Lesley responded to a request from Jenny (from Cupar) to dance 'Touched by an Angel'. It was interesting to hear Lesley's story of how she had been inspired by the comet Ikeya-Zhang, a most beautiful light touched by the angels, to create this stunning dance sung by the Canadian singer Celine Dion. For some the dance was a new experience and for others it was a chance to revisit and enjoy again the freedom of movement which Lesley's choreography evokes.

'To Milo', The Apple, was next on the programme which, for most of us, was a return to a much loved oldie.

Following this, Lesley asked for a volunteer (Rachel from Edinburgh) to help her lead a gateway and soon we were dipping and diving around the room to the lively and exciting music of Al Achat.

Following on from the uplifting 'Arms of Creation', Lesley brought to a close our joyous

day of dancing with her hypnotising choreography to Il Divo's beautiful rendition of Leonard Cohen's 'Aleluya'.

And finally, as we huddled in closely to say our goodbyes, it was amazing to realise that we had just enjoyed an entire day of dancing to just one person's choreographies, each one so different from the other and each in turn expressing a myriad of different emotions.