

Strictly Ian

Claire Saul talks to Ian Waite

Photo: Blue Fish Media

Charismatic *Strictly Come Dancing* favourite Ian Waite has had a busy few months. Aside from performing in the show and regularly appearing on its BBC2 nightly sister show *It Takes Two*, he has been busy with the launch of his spectacular DVD *The Magic of Dance*. Ian talks to Dance Expression about his latest projects.

Strictly is an incredibly popular series.

I'm especially proud of *Strictly* and what it has done to raise the profile of dancing. It appeals to a huge range of ages and it has renewed interest in dance: my parents have had to double the beginner's classes at their dance school, just to fit everyone in! Hopefully we dancers are all doing a really good job in being ambassadors for our sport. It's an amazing honour to participate in the show and I'm proud of having made the final and semi-final in series two and three.

Do you prefer performing some styles of dance more than others?

I love both ballroom and Latin American but I have tended to specialise in Latin as for much of my dancing career I had a partner who was much shorter than me (I'm 6ft 2"!), so physically the ballroom didn't look so well balanced. *Strictly* has given me the opportunity to dance my ballroom again. I love all the dances; each has a different character and technique and a unique feel.

How did you start dancing?

When I was ten years old my father decided to take dancing lessons. He took my brother and me along and to start with I just refused to take part, but the girls there eventually dragged me on to the dance floor. I became completely hooked and soon my rugby and football coaches were being given notes from my dad saying that I needed to be excused from practice as I had a dance class!

Even though you have over twenty years of dancing experience, do you still get nervous before you perform?

Absolutely! Adrenalin helps for a spontaneous performance but I must say I am never as nervous as I am 30 seconds before going on live on *Strictly*! It's incredibly nerve-wracking, especially when you are going on with a beginner. You don't really know how they are going to cope with the pressure of performing outside of their comfort zone, on live TV.

Does it feel strange to compete against your professional partner, Camilla Dallerup?

Camilla and I have been competing against each other since about the age of fourteen when we were dancing in top level international competitions. We became profes-

sional partners in 2004 and we've been best friends ever since. It's hard to compete against her in some ways as we are just like brother and sister. On the other hand, as I'm so close to her I feel as though I have two chances to win when we're competing in *Strictly*.

Tell us about *The Magic Of Dance* DVD, which you have just released.

It's a dance fantasy, with Camilla and I performing a range of dances in some wonderful locations around the country. We've taken dances out of the ballroom and filmed them in settings inspired by their different characters. So for example, we perform a dreamy and romantic waltz on a rooftop with the lights of London behind us and we quickstep in a magnificent 1930's mansion. It was fantastic filming it all.

Did any of the locations pose any challenges for your performance?

Dancing the samba on the beach was actually very difficult as there were lots of holes in the sand and there were areas where it was either softer or harder. Certain spins were difficult and so was the spotting because of the variation in the ground. But it was one of the locations we enjoyed the most as it was out in the open, and it was great to have that feeling of rawness and being able to express ourselves.

What else is on the DVD?

We have also included some tuition at both basic and more advanced levels, where we demonstrate steps from the waltz, the cha cha, the jive, the samba, the quickstep and the social foxtrot.

You also made a DVD with Angela Rippon. How did you find that experience?

It was a rather frightening, because she was such a pro and so talented! She was brilliant at picking things up and fantastic to work with. I learned so much from her presenting-wise, too.

What is your motto in life?

Always aim for the moon because even if you miss you will still have danced among the stars.



Magic of Dance DVD Signed copies to be won

Three autographed copies of Ian and Camilla's new *Magic of Dance* DVD are to be won by three lucky readers of *Dance Expression*. Just released by Deep Water Films, retailing at £19.99, the DVD is described as a romantic ballroom and Latin dance fantasy. Extras include personal tuition from Camilla and Ian, how dance lifts the mind as well as fitness levels, the secrets behind the images and where to get the dresses and the look; and what learning to dance did for the confidence of the students. Write to the Editor at the address on page 4, marking your envelope "Magic of Dance DVD", and three names picked at random will each receive a copy.

Camilla and Ian

Photo: Peter Yeo

