

AN AUDIENCE WITH Rudi Trautz
MC: Greg Smith, John Kimmins

GS: Ladies and Gentlemen, Good evening everyone.

And I'm sure that this next part of the congress is going to be a wonderful part as well.

We had four great lectures, so much information, but the information we are going to get now is about the life of very special person. Someone we're very pleased and honoured that has come here to share his dancing life with us. This man, ladies and gentlemen, has so many titles that it's just amazing. I'll just read you a few of his titles first.

- 28 times German Champion, Latin, Ballroom and Ten Dance
- 8 times European Champion, 7 in Latin, 1 in Ballroom
- 4 times British Professional Latin Champion
- Grand Finalist in Ballroom of the British Open and World Championships and
- 3 times Star at UK Latin Champion
- 4 times World Cup Professional Latin Champion
- 4 times World Professional Latin Champion
- He's been awarded the Golden Dance Shoe in Germany
- 2 times Carl Alan Award winner
- BDF Award, Bill & Bobby Award
- DFI Award
- Prince Mikasa Award in Japan
- The Silver Roll of the President of the Federal Republic of Germany

It's not bad.

<applause>

And ladies & Gentleman, also a coach to many many champions and has adjudicated all the major championships in the world. Ladies and Gentleman, Mr. Rudi Trautz.

<applause>

Thank you, Rudi. OK, we can start now. John, would you like to start questions, or would you like me to do?

Rudi: Oh, can I say something?

John: Of course.

Rudi: I think, it's OK, it's OK, I think you choose the wrong person to have, to this interview because half the people have left.

Greg: No, no, no. Maybe it's a comfortable break.

Rudi: OK, ok, ok.

Greg: Possibly a comfortable break. Well, we'll start at the very beginning, and really "How did you get involved ... in dancing?"

Rudi: Oh, very simple, that, I was at 16 years old and like all the young people in Germany went to the dancing school to have a beginner class, and that was it.

From the first, one I knew that's what I wanted to do, I want to dance and I want to teach dancing. That hasn't have changed. That's very simple.

John: Now Rudi, you know, we've done some research and we've known each other for a long time. Your father Wilhelm was an opera singer. Do you feel like that helped you with your dancing career with the musical knowledge? And do you also sing? And if you do, give us a song.

Rudi: OK, I'll do the first question. That's definitely helped, of course, because I was brought up with music. Of course it was classical music, my father always singing it at home and doing exercise "Ba ba ba ba ba-". It's so wonderful, singing and playing the piano, and so, that also is a love of classical music I have.

And, so ... I was brought up with music, definitely. That helped, yes. Singing, if you want me to sing, you want to empty the room completely?

<laughter>

Greg: That would happen if I sang.

Rudi: OK, you want me to sing?

<Applause>

Rudi: So, you must help me. You must do two things for me. One thing is, if I go like this and that, you go "Cha Cha Cha". Can we try?

One, and!

<Cha Cha Cha>

Oh, that ... we have to practice, again. One and!

<Cha Cha Cha!>

That's better.

And the next thing you have to do is, if you have to do is a little bit of Latin American Rhythm.

"Tic, chac, tic chac"

Come, join me.

<Tic, chac >

Louder.

Keep doing it.

(sing) Amor, amor, amorI sing you a song for you tonight, for half a minute.

amor, amor, amor, I raise my hands, and you will stop forever.

<Cha Cha Cha>

Thank you!

Greg: That's great

<Applause>

Greg: Very good, very good. OK. No, not me. Would you like to try another Alan.... no, no thank you. And in 1954 after the singing, you moved to Switzerland. Why is that?

Rudi: Money.

Greg: Oh, that's a good reason.

Rudi: Well, you see, my father was long time prisoner of war in, with the Russians. And, it wasn't a problem for the whole family of course. My father was not in the party, as a singer and an actor, you should actually have been with the Nazi party. He was not. This is why he was sent to the war. And when he actually came back after many many years, he had no chance to come back to singing. Because the old relationships, they were still there and he had no chance. So, we were poor, we had no money.

And, of course, my parents wanted me to go on to school and eventually to study but after a certain stage, I just stopped and went to work as a builder, building doing, very hard job, then. The only thing I could then do is to move to Switzerland because there, I had a chance to earn enough money to put it into dance, so I could dance. So, that was the reason I went to Switzerland. Very simple.

John: Now, really how many partners did you before you developed the famous partnership with Metchild, four or five? Five?

Rudi: Five, six? I think six.

Greg: But one of the romance that we found because I am new, of course, you dance with Metch. But we found another one and this is in a German dance magazine, with ???
I think it was in 1961.

Rudi: Well, that was a great partnership, then, I learned a lot from that woman and I must say that was, that was really a start of me and --- I can only say---- that auto-form unfortunately Inga died about 3 years ago and she was very ill. And actually it came from smoking. So, guys, keep off smoking. Yes, yes, that was a very good time.

Greg: And then, you went back to Germany in 1954,

Rudi: 58

Jon: 58, OK. You took a professional exam and started to compete in pro-camps. And how was that, and what achievement did you have with Inga?

Rudi: Well, we won, I think 3 or 4 German Championships, Latin American, 10 dance. We came, err, I think in the first World Championships came in 6th, oh, not a World Championships, another competition in Berlin, where we came in the 2nd actually. That was a very interesting competition, and I think it is from that competition, that was the first professional competition that officially the Cha Cha Cha was included. And we won. And if I look at that step, it was exactly that step moving all that was, ...

<applause>

Greg: I think we have another photo, as well ***, of that competition. That's it. There was another couple in that competition, Bill and Bobby actually won that competition.

Rudi: Yes.

Greg: And then, Dennis Udell & Joyce Brampton were also dancing and they were third. And Rudi won the Viennese Waltz, the Rumba, the Paso Double and Cha Cha.

Rudi: That's right.

Greg: So, it was a close competition?

Rudi: Yeah, it was a close competition, but that's the competition where we really were, especially me, got very close friends with Bill and Bobby and since, all that since that time we have been friends.

Greg: That's good. And I think now, this is in 1961, we have a DVD of you dancing in Holland in 1962. That's the one. In Kurhaus in Scheveningen (Netherlands). Many people have danced there.

<Video>

Greg: You'll see also some very famous other competitors are there to dance, at the same time, someone who was just a few minutes ago on this very stage. Revolving dancers now.

MC: Peter Eggleton and Brenda Winslade, ???

<dancing>

MC. <in Dutch>

Greg: He said you are the favourite to win.

John: The third couple on the floor is an Italian couple. I didn't get his name but I think it is Italian couple. Beautiful.

Rudi: That's history right these.

John: Now Rudi, later on you went to Australia and took lessons with the very famous man that Andrew mentioned earlier, the one and only Henry Jacques, then I guess he gave you some very important information. Could you share that with us?

Rudi: Well, that, we had, I think it was 2 or 3 days we had lessons with him and for me that was very important because he made me believe in myself. He said, probably he said to every pupils, his pupils. He said you can be a champion. Go on and do it. So, that what I did. Of course, there were a lot of information.

I remember one thing where he explained that Ballroom dance is not step but you have to move your body, that you have to move inside of your body.

Then, one of the things he mentioned, he asked me "What is sway?"

So, I tried all the explanations and he said, "No, no. Sway is very simple – lift your shoulder blades."

Greg: Is that?

Rudi: Yes, he said, "Up shoulder, your shoulder blades". This is how you create Sway, but just to show that, he tried me to use every part of the body to express dancing.

A lot of simple things about choreography, listening to Peter Eggleton tell one thing he said about Tango, "You have to be as strong as a horse and at the same time, you have to be as soft and as oily as a Panda as a Tiger.

So, this combination was his explanation for the Tango.

Rudi: Music again was a very important part, that, what he said that whatever you do, try to dance music. Just a few too simple things but that really helped a lot, yes.

Greg: Now most people know that you and Metch are still dancing together. How long and when

did you stop it?

Rudi: It must be in 1964, err , I met Metch at a carnival but actually, and so I got to know that she was dancing also and I met ..., well, that's how it started.

Greg: And you had such a great career together.

Rudi: Oh, yes, yes. Err, When, when we teamed up, we, I decided then to sell my dance school I had in Reinisborg, and so, of course there was no money. And funny thing is that I tried and teach whole year as coach and trainer and the ADTV, the German Ballroom Dancing Association said to us that "Well, after 3 months, he will be bankrupt. He has no more money." But the fact was that, after 3 months, we were booked out. Actually I was the first trainer in Germany just living for competitive dancing, that was the start of Ballroom in Germany.

Greg: Now it has changed a lot. Now a lot of people are doing it. We have a DVD also of you and Metch dancing a samba. Here we are.

<Video>

Greg: OK, now, ??? Now I noticed in that programme but you had a "Flying Angel" and the "Horse and Cart" that was a particular favourite of John and myself. You know, we used to do a lot. You know, when we danced against to each other and John's Flying Angel was ... infamous. And do you think they should be brought back in fashion, Rudi?

Rudi: Well, I don't know. I think, I've see one or two couples trying to bring the Horse and Cart back but honestly I don't believe it suits in the modern Latin American style of dancing. I don't think so. Maybe, we would have to change it completely, to make, to look completely different. Maybe it's an idea, yes. Number of old steps that came back have completely changed. So...

Greg: With modern twists.

Rudi: Yes.

Greg: Who knows, who knows.

Joh: Yeah, I'm sure everyone noticed as we did you were wearing a dinner suit and I think that was just about the time that the dinner suites went out of fashion, correct? Were you the last champion to wear the dinner suit professionally?

Rudi: I don't know but probably it is possible because the... That was difficult, the dinner jacket was difficult. You had to move and lift your arms but you were not allowed to lift your jacket above the collar so that was a hard thing to do.

You see, all these movements are uglier when they are restricted. And when Wolfgang Opitz, he was the first one in cat suit, and when he started this, we were all very very happy because that was a great change.

John: Did you ever ware Bolero jacket like Wally did, or not?

Rudi: Nope. A shirt. A very fluffy style shirt that was the next thing after the catsuit.

Greg: OK, then, you had a very successful career with Metch and winning many major titles. Is there any particular one that stands out in your memory?

Rudi: Well, there are a few. I mean all the first ones stands out. I mean winning the first German Championship or the first European Championship. Like the first European Championship, that

was, we were the number 2 in Germany. And that was a championship in Duisburg, the European Championship.

We trained with Nina Hunt and Zoltan Siegfried & Annalese Krane who were the champions, and the English judge for the competition was Sydney Francis and Nina didn't like that at all.

So she tried to convince Siegfried that you should intervene with German association that he should not judge. Siegfried said "No, no way." So, she approached me.

"I couldn't care less who's judging. My job is dancing. Who's judging, I couldn't care less."

When the Championship came, and the first one to put up 1 for us was Sydney Francis. He made us European Champions. So, that was a fantastic, still thankful to him for that.

Greg: That went very well. You haven't looked back since. One special memory for me, and also for John, we were both there, and there's not that many people now that can say then that, especially in this room, 1967 was the World Professional Championships in Australia, in Melbourne. And I was a very young junior. John was about 35 then.

And I can remember going around with a programme book trying to get all the famous people and great dancers to sign this programme book for me.

I think now we have a photo of this programme book, ladies and gentlemen, you can see a lot of signatures on it. And this is the book here.

And signed also by Rudi and Metch Trautz. And that was the first time that we met.

Rudi: Yes. That was, then, a very very interesting World Championship, I remember.

Oh, it was. It was... Err... Well the days before the Championships actually, we practiced together in the studio with Bill & Bobby. And that was very funny because that was boosting up our confidence to start with. Because Bill & Bobby, they didn't have their routines ready. They were trying to fiddle around and argue what to dance and we looked each other and said "That doesn't look too bad", -- you see. So...

And there was another thing. I think it was the day before the Championship, there was a big meeting and Metch and I gave a lecture about Modern, at that time, Modern and Latin American dancing.

And I think I brought that over a very, very well, because everybody was pleased, of course, all the judges were there. So, that helped also that somehow we were seen with different eyes.

Then, the competition came, and Metch was down in the changing room and I came up and listened to the band that was playing. And that music was absolutely awful. It was awful. So, I went down to get Metch upstairs and "Metch listen to the music." She said "Wooo, that's dreadful."

I said "You shut up and listen to it. It was the most wonderful Latin American music you can think of." So, we were standing there for about 20 min listening to the music, telling ourselves how beautiful it was.

We were the only ones when the competition started, all the competitors and other couples went out and heard the music. Of course, you could see their faces, and they were, we were shining going out dancing, and I think with the first dance we had the audience.

And... I remember in the final, Paso Doble, they played Samba.

Metch said "That was Samba." I said "No, it's wonderful Paso Doble." So, we went and danced

Paso Double to the music of Samba. A half way through, they stopped and played Paso Double.

But this is how the competition went.

Then, when actually the result was announced, Metch had to drag me onto the floor. Because I was standing there, open mouthed, I couldn't move because I was paralyzed. Then she dragged me and said "Come on! You won!" That was the championship, wonderful.

John: Then, you had lessons with a lot of people, and I'll name some of the people for you, Victor Barrett, Sammy Lucky, Henry Jacques, Len Scrivener, Benny Tolmeyer, Paul Krepps, Sonny Binick. Do you have some special memories of some of the first lessons? I can imagine.

Rudi: Oh, all of them, all of them. The funny thing is that all of the teachers you mentioned only one is still living, it's Paul Krepps. And he must be now, well in his 90's, 96, 97.

And Victor Barrett actually, when we moved to Switzerland, we had a very good teacher living in Zurich. His name was Albert Tzrukey and actually, he was trained by Eric Hancox. So, somehow, in the end, the circle ended when we started in Switzerland.

And Victor Barrett came for a couple of days to Zurich to work with Albert Tzrukey, and of course, we were happy to get a few lessons, so the first contact for me was Victor Barrett. And what are other stories?

John: Well, there's a special Scribner story about when you worked on Waltz for several days.

Rudi: Ahh. Everybody who had lessons with Len Scribner knows how he was in his first lesson. They all know that he, looking out of the window, kicking the floor, "You cannot dance! You only walk." So, that was the first lesson. You know all that. But we had very often ... we brought him to Germany to ??? (name of the place). And when we brought him to teach in ???, we always worked Monday until Friday, and everyday 6 hours, and we practiced before we picked up the teacher, so we had practiced, err, so, we worked minimum 8 hours every day, and that was before German Championship.

So, we started this Waltz basic in Monday morning. And, we worked on the Waltz basic, and Friday morning, Len said, "And if you are not doing anything else but Waltz basic, I go crazy!"

I said "Is my Waltz basic good?" He said, "No." I said "OK, let's continue to work on it."

Actually, we did the other four dances then in the last hour, but we won the German Championship by practicing Waltz basic continually. Mind you, we didn't win the Waltz. We didn't win the Waltz.

John: Well, maybe it was Len Scrivener, not you.

Greg: You said also Sonny Binick always seemed to help you when you were very confused.

Rudi: Oh, yes. I think - there are lot of people who worked with Sonny Binick. I mean there, with Latin American somehow we had the guidance with Nina Hunt. We were very happy and I knew what to do. With Ballroom, I sometimes did not know any more what to do and I felt very often like... Throwing myself in the Thames to finish the whole business and that always was the time we had to go to Sonny Binick because somehow we went that , , , , , don't worry , , , , , we went.

So, when we had problem we went to Sony Binick and after that lesson, we always good dance again. He was wonderful in that respect.

John: You're still searching for, you know, further knowledge, you went for lessons to Bill Irvin, and then Bill also introduced you to one of his mentors, a major influence in your life.

Rudi: As I said, Bill and Bobby were our friends many years, we demonstrated very often, and in the early competitions, we competed each other and we were always good friends. And somehow I said once to Bill, "Would you give me a lesson?", and he said "Yes, why not". And actually after the first lesson he said to me "I'm very astonished about you." I said "What do you mean?"

He said, "Well, I thought you were having a very fixed mind. I found you to be open completely for everything."

So I said, "Well, if you are searching for something, you have to be open."

But this lesson, I remember that because listening to Graham before about feet the one question Bill asked me - he said to me "Do you know why you are a Latin American Champion?"

I said, "No. You will tell me."

He said, "Because you got the best feet. Do you know why I am the Ballroom Champion?"

I said, "You mean because you have the best feet?"

He said, "Exactly."

It's so funny, in Latin American I worked so hard on my feet.

One of the things before we started to dance together was, I was walking through the dances first without music, just watching my feet. And then, with music - just watching the feet. Then we practiced together.

And in Ballroom, somehow, I thought I have good feet so goof feet, so I never cared. So, that was very important thing but John, to your question, that when actually, it was Bobby who said "Can I

recommend you to have a lesson with Erick Hancox.

I said, "Well, if you think, we'll do that."

So, they arranged a lesson for us, in Blackpool, before Championship in --- a little place outside of Blackpool. Err, it will come to me. Fleetwood Bay? It was Fleetwood. Exactly.

And that studio -- so, we had a lesson with Eric, and afterwards, Bill and Bobby had a lesson, so they came in, at the door, when they look at us, he said, "Well Trauz, that looks better now."

And I felt awful. We then out of the studio, oh the studio and I said to Metch, "For Friday, we completely forgot the lesson. I cannot dance like that, impossible."

So, that was the first lesson. Then we went back to Manchester for a complete week.

And, actually on the first day, Eric tried to throw me out of the studio because we had an argument.

And, err, in anyhow, in the end, I said "No, you're ... I'm going that, to make that easy for you - I'm not going out - you have to tell me really what I do wrong."

We found the big mistake and err, it was so interesting when we came back to London, he had someone else's lesson.

The first comment was, "Well, now you have to win what I have tried to tell for 4 year". But that teacher did not know them we had lessons with Eric Hancox. And he found out later, that was not so good.

John: Some things never change.

Rudi: But, err, but that actually was the commencing of a relationship. More or less Erich Hancox was like a second father for me and he was very often in Germany, even when we long time had stopped dancing he still came, practically until he was - until he died.

I remember him in the studio sitting like that because he couldn't sit up straight anymore, and one of his last lessons was, he went up and touched my shoulders and did the Feather Step and three steps of the Reverse Turn, that was all he did, and he said, now my work is done for this week. But he told me off then. And said, "How long do you think I have to teach you that? What would you do if I am dead? Who's going to help you, then?"

The funny thing is that when he died, I was at the funeral. I never needed advice again. It always stayed in my ear, and from that time, it was settled. He had to die first, sorry.

John: Nina was your main life coach, everybody knows that. In that very salubrious premises in Balham High Road, and ---

Rudi: Well it started in Streatham. Oh, yes, it was a wonderful studio. And I can remember there something. Manabu Shinoda came there for lessons. And the normal thing for Japanese was she would carry all her bags and walking behind Manabu.

So, the first thing Nina said "Manabu come here. We are here in Europe. The custom here is the man is carrying the heavy stuff, and the lady stop walking behind you, and on your side. So, when he finished the lesson, he had the packages and walked out. And then we went to the window to look down.

So, he came out the door, he looked around, looked up, gave her baggage, walked forward. She was walking behind. That was my memory from Kentish Town.

John: Yah, I think we all have some Nina stories amongst us. This is a lot of, like a ground and room and see a lot of people who were associated with Nina. Anything special?

Rudi: Yeah, with Nina, it was a constant fighting. It was, we're always fighting. Well, remember, it was a time when the development of Latin American dance was enormous. Whenever we were in London, I was once or twice minimum in Covent Garden, Ballets. I always had a book there to write down, did like yes, so then we went back to practice, then we went to Nina, and said, there's an idea. I want that, I want that, I want that, I want that.

Now the special thing about Nina was, I'm sure she learned as much from every of her pupil as she gave us. Because the whole Latin America Dance was in the process, developing process. So you had to get all the information wherever it came from.

So, we were always onto new things and -- I remember the first lesson when I had a Rumba. You know coming from the Square Rumba, where there was hip action. And we had to do a Cuban Rumba.

And she said, "Oh, the Cuban Rumba? There is no hip action. "

I said "What?"

"There is no hip action in the Cuban Rumba."

I said, "Nina, I can't dance Rumba without hip action."

So, the next time we came to six weeks later, we couldn't do enough hip action. Everybody suddenly was doing the hip action.

Well, it was with the Paso Double. That was still in Kentish Town. So, she wanted me to look up all the time. You know, in that studio, there were a lot of posters from bullfights. And, of course, they were all in different positions. Not look up.

She said "Look at them. You're not looking at them"

"The bull is not flying."

It's the starting of a story, you know, the things we had a new programme.

So, we went to Germany, we practiced it, and when we came back, and danced a competition, all the Swedners some of more or less had to do your new programme. Because everybody else was doing our programme.

And the best thing was, once in America, it was Los Angeles we demonstrated and we, I gave lessons, and I had a senior couple. He must have been a Chinese originally, and he came in.

He wanted a lesson, he wanted a Paso Double. So we worked on the Paso Double, and somewhere during the lesson, I said "Well, it's not correct. After that this is the step coming, then this is coming."

He looked at me ,, "How do you know?"

I said, "Well, it's our Paso Doble from last year. I know every step."

(laughter)

Of course that was Nina. That was developing of Latin American Dancing so that was normal. Everybody was stealing from everybody else.

Like in the Paso Double, in Blackpool, there was one event or something special we always tried to make something special for next year's Blackpool.

So, one day, I said we have to start the Paso Double in a different way. Because normally then, we stood and started to dance Paso Double. So, I went to a position like that and she went to a position like that before the music started. So, we had the attention from of audience.

So, that was the first year. From the next year on, we have that all see today in your position in Paso Double.

Greg: So, that was your fault.

Rudi: Yes, it's my fault. Sorry.

<applause>

Rudi: And Nina was a wonderful teacher. A wonderful teacher.

Greg: I think we can all agree to that. We have a DVD of you dancing Cha Cha, and if you have a look, maybe you'll see some of other well known couples in this. Rudi and Mech are in the front but I've seen Anthony and Paula Goodyear dancing and I don't know who else but maybe some other people we'll see.

The cha cha DVD... Can we have the Cha Cha? We'll get the cha cha, it's coming.

And, there was one other thing that we come back to the cha cha, but do you have - you told me something about Alex Moore and the Viennese Waltz as well. This is coming from Latin to Ballroom.

Rudi: Yeah, the Viennese Waltz was always a controversial thing between Alex Moor and us. He always tried to tell me that I'm not allowed to dance any other figures than Nat. Turn, Rev. Turn, Fleckerl on Left and Reverse, that is Natural Fleckerl, then the check. And I always danced the certain steps that took me from Nat. Turns to Rev. Turn so I was always on the in the phrase of music of 12345678. Not, 45678 123.

So, Alex said to me "Listen, you are not allowed to dance this figure. If you do it the next time, I warn you that I cannot mark you."

So, I said "Alex, I understand that it is your job. But my job is as a dancer is to dance with the music and with the phrase of music, I just cannot dance out of time in the reverse turn." He never marked us down. He gave us the first.

John: That's good. That's a good news.

Greg: Now we have the Cha Cha

Rudi: They're laughing at me!

Greg: I think there was also, there was Normic? Was he also at the back?

Rudi: Probably yes.

Audience: Fisher.

Greg: Fisher was also there? And the tall couple was, I think Marcel.... Richard Gleave as well

Rudi: That was the one of the World couple. I think it was Minz.

John: What is this story about Alex More again and the south of England about an umbrella?

Rudi: Well, that was something I at first did not understand because in one of his letter service he was at the competition and wrote afterwards his style is as a rolled umbrella. And I was very nervous because I thought, "Jesus Christ. The step was that bad? A rolled umbrella".

So, well actually Nina explained, "It's a great compliment. Because the rolled umbrella means typical English. So, that means you have a typical English styles." That was a good news.

Greg: Yeah, it could be misinterpreted.

Rudi: I thought, "Am I that stiff"?"

Greg: Exactly. No, no.

We are going to see now because we now have a DVD of your dancing ballroom. And that was against in a team match with England Germany, I think.

Greg: I just want to make a quick point, Rudi.

John: But you think back and those dresses were a devil to dance with.

But do you think you notice a Lady's speed a lot more in those dresses than you do today? I don't know, maybe it's just me.

Rudi: No, sometimes too long. You can see the ankles and the feet any more, its there. They are definitely too long. But please never dance in these dresses again. Please, please. I loved, I loved. I think Ballroom more than I did Latin. I say that, and -

And the tail suit and the dresses were awful. Actually I had an idea then. Because with the frills, they were all around. I said if you take a triangle in where you have an open space. So I started that actually. So she did that. I could stand next to her and it wasn't so awful with the legs.

John: It's funny you should say that because Hazel developed on that when she made dresses and I know Carol did as well. They had the little space and it was easy to walk in there. Anyway, just a point. Excuse me!

Rudi: Dancers.

John: Terrible.

John: You know that... Anyway, let's continue now. And you know, once you retired, which was when? When really did you retire? 80...

Rudi: 70.

John: 75 or 6?

Rudi: 70. We came back in 72 for a European Championship Latin which we won. And then we retired.

John: Because I can remember see you dance at Hammersmith Palais in 71 or 72 in the UK. They had a separated Viennese Waltz Competition which you won. And then you came third in the Championship. I thought that might have been the last time you danced. I do remember. My memory is still pretty good.

Rudi: I think it was definitely the year '71 we did not dance. We came back in December '72.

John: After that you came back and started coaching and doing a lot of lecturing world-wide.

Rudi: We still had lessons, and we still demonstrated I think for another 8 years, and we always had lessons and never let go as long as we demonstrate, we take lessons, try to keep up. I must say really. I think sometimes you need two lives to achieve what you can or could or would or want to achieve in dancing.

And I especially in the ballroom after I stopped competing that was the time where I or we danced our best ballroom because the pressure of competition was away our only able to produce the music on the dance floor . That was wonderful really, it was lovely to go on dance so many years.

Greg: We have, I think another DVD with you dancing with Peter and Inga Fisher also, and that's after you retired?

Rudi: Yes, it must have be in 74 or 75.

John: Now Rudi, you've been obviously the Present of the German Professional Dance Organization for so many years now, and now honorary vice President of that. And for many years, vice president of the WDC, and now the honorary vice president of the WDC.

We know it takes up a lot of people's time to be in administrative positions, and I think everyone appreciates your honesty and forthrightness in everything you approach from a political standpoint.

Greg: And it's very good that people give back to dancing by and doing this, it's very important.

Rudi: Yeah, but still...this is a bit of a disappointment in my life, I really tried to do something for dancing and somehow I nearly succeeded. There was one time when the joint committee was the still together and there was a moment where we are the ISTD and ICBT try to form one world body. And I actually begged Leonard Morgan to let me do the job for the professional side together with Rudi Bauman from Switzerland. But ?? suggested them that it would be Peter Powell and Vincent Bulger to do it because they were living together in America.

They never met. If Rudi Bauman, if the two Rudis, I would like to say, would have done it, probably

we wouldn't have had the problems we are having today.
That was definitely a missed opportunity. Very sad about that that I couldn't help to clear that up.
As you all know the situation, today is bad.

John: Well, I suggest that the two Rudis get together again.

Rudi: Yeah, but Rudi Bauman does not have these ideas anymore.

John: Well, it wouldn't hurt.

Greg: You changed over, and we're getting on to the romantic side now. You found Martina and married.

(a clamor)

Rudi: Hello, Martina!

Greg: Martina and of course you are very very proud parents of your son Nicholas and your daughter Nina. How and when did you meet Martina? And one other thing, how is it being a parent watching your child competing in dancing?

Rudi: I actually know Martina for a long time, I can remember her being a little girl with very long black hair, very attractive. And actually she came to Augsburg to train for the professional examinations. So she stays years in Augsburg and it just happened there.

(a clamor)

Rudi: That's how we are together.

(laughing)

Rudi: And that's a story. We have dance school with beer cellar underneath, and we met every evening. And I was playing cards, and she was playing cards as well. So every night, more or less, after the work, we'd play cards together. So, this is how it all started.

Greg: So you must won because ...

Rudi: No no no no.

Greg: No?

Rudi: No no no no. That was very even. She is very good at playing cards - amongst other things.

John: How about watching Nina dance now? that must be bitter sweet in some ways. All the rest, you go through to become a champion, you know, then your daughter's out there you love so much, trying to do their very best and you know the politics and all that stuff.

Rudi: It is not very easy, but when she decided, it came from one day to the other, she wants to dance. I said "Please, no."

"Yes, I want to dance."

But she was from very early, from very young on she was always with us at Blackpool.

So on that feeling, when she decided she wants to dance, she was sitting next to me. And I said you agree with the result. "No!" she said "Terrible".

I said "You still want to dance?"

She said Yes, I still want to dance! I said, never come to me and complain about the result.

Greg: Very good, Rudi, very good.

Rudi: Until today, more or less, she is, more or less, she's kept that. She is not complaining about the results.

What I said to her when the people, the audience are getting up the floor and doing a lynch act on the judges, then you can complain, but before they don't do that, you have no right to complain. You have to get better. And sometimes very hard, yes.

Greg: But in between all of this, Rudi, you were dancing and doing everything but you had your pilot's license. Did you used to fly to competitions as well?

Rudi: Yes, I flew to Blackpool very often, I flew to London. I flew actually all over the world with that plane. I did many licenses actually, not only the pilot license, boating license, surfing license, learning languages. Me, in that case, I'm a very restless person. I always have to learn something new and without learning, that's impossible for me, I always have to know something. Golfing is of course now wonderful because we have never stop learning in golf, so that's OK.

John: I remember his first introduction to golf, remember, at Fleetwood. You and Gurt came along and walked along with Brian and myself. And you said to me "I'm going to play golf", and I said "Rudi, you're a fanatic. This game's gonna really get to you. Remember?"

Rudi: Yes. That's got to be Yes.

John: And you have a large dance school in Germany for many years. Do you still work actively with beginning pupils?

Rudi: Ah, very little beginners, very little, sometimes if it happens that one of the teachers is ill or cannot do it by my ???,

I do a few classes all people that dance for many years with us. Some of their dance for over 30 years now, over 30 years and sad point is they are not getting better, getting worse every year.

(laughing)

Greg: The good part is they're still paying for the lessons!

Rudi: Yes, they are still paying lessons and still getting without better.

Greg: Now Rudi, in 2004 and 2005, you judged the Blackpool Open Dance Festival, in the evening panel. You and Mr. Kimmins were the first official, obviously there were some of the overseas people before, but you were the first official overseas adjudicators for 68 years at that moment.

Rudi: ...

Greg: How does it make you feel? What was your thought about that?

Rudi: Well that make me feel very proud, to start with, and that was a wonderful experience because you can say what you like that panel of judges is doing great job and they were trying, really trying to judge dancing.

Whatever is said, it's not true it's that like a sworn-in group of people who really trying to assess the dancing top there. And on the other hand, I felt more or less that was correct I was asked to judge. I danced for many years in that competition, I won it four times, and I had a feeling it was only correct I should judge at one time, even twice also.

That was my feeling, I was proud. At the same time, I thought there was a justice done, at the same time.

By the way, Blackpool has so many memories, you know, we went over the part very quickly.

At first, the championship we danced, we danced the first time in the Latin American Dance Championship and we came third. Today, this wouldn't be possible. Impossible today.

A new comer getting to the final, and to come third ... we came in with the lowest possible amount of marks and we still came third. So that was a great memory.

And I can also remember Margaret and Robert O'hara, they had always a fan group with them, that was a formation team of Peggy Spencer.

And they were always going with Margaret and Robert O'hara. If he was dancing on that corner, they went over there and cheered. If they went to the other side, cheering. Nobody was cheering for us!

Actually I thought that's funny. I said, so I looked up the balcony at one side and I was shouting my number. I was shouting our own number 34! So, the people listened to us so, they started shouting our number as well. That's what I did. I have to do something advertising for myself!

And a year later, actually, a formation from Dusseldorf came to compete.

So, I said to them, "Listen, there is that formation for O'hara. You bring two barrels of beer on the bus with you, I'll pay for it if you come and cheer for us." So, they did that. That was a good competition.

Greg: That's a better system. A much better system.

John: Now obviously, you've been inspired many of your coaches. Is there any special advice you would like to pass onto the competitors of today.

Rudi: That's a very serious question.

Really sometimes ... I only can say if somebody starts to dance, he must start to dance and continue, because he or she or they love to dance. That's the first thing.

I have many couples said to me "If I would know that I would become a champion, I would put in all that work that I would do that. But if you think like that, you have no chance at all.

You have to love it, and you have to just continue to work on it, and you, you, that dancing must not fill your life, you must eat dancing, drink dancing, you must sleep dancing...

And people very often ask me what it was that made us champions and I say work.

And when we danced the first German Championship, Latin, we came 3rd.

*** first, *** second, we were third.

And people asked us "What was your aim?"

So, "We want to become a world champion"

I said, "When do you think you become world champions?"

"I think, well, it will take us three years."

"How can you say that it will take you three years?"

I said "I made enquiries. I talked to all the competitors that are competing against us.

And I asked them when they started to dance.

How much they practice, every week, how many hours.

So, I was counting them up and to be break even and I knew we had to practice for three years, everyday minimum of 6 hours.

We did that. And we became the world champion exactly three years after that. Luck, lucky, very luck.

But that is the advice – love dancing, love music, and just do it for love of it.

And that is the advice I would give to the competitors.

Greg: That's a very good advice. Someone said the harder I trained the luckier I get.

Rudi: That's right.

Greg: Now ladies and gentlemen, we have seen Rudi on DVD, we've heard him sing. Maybe, would you like to see a little dance?

<applause>

Now I understand that this is Rudi's programme from ...

Rudi: Well, it's the original choreography of 1967 to the beginning of 68.

Greg: So, if we might stand, ladies and gentlemen, maybe move this across, John. Now some space.

Rudi's gonna get rid of his microphone.

Now if I just go behind here, I might find a partner for you, Rudi. I'll just have a little look.

I think I see someone. Beautiful girl. You're very lucky.

Let's see.

And this, ladies and gentlemen, this is the original from Metch. And of course, this is his original daughter Nina.

<dance>

How about that – ladies and gentlemen, Undefeatable Latin American champion, Rudi Trauz and his beautiful daughter Nina. That was so special. Rudi Trauz, ladies and gentlemen, and Nina, thank you.

Rudi: Nina, don't dance these steps tomorrow.

Greg: One again, that's a very special moment. Ladies and gentlemen, the incomparable Mr. Rudi Trauz.

John: Well, ladies and gentlemen, just before we depart, on behalf of the BDFI, thank you for being here, but I would like to bring Mr. Trauz back on to the floor for the final farewell. Rudi Trauz, ladies and gentlemen. Dare I say, you were always a great inspiration to all those couples from other countries.

Bet all your success paved the way for a lot of the rest of our success.

Thank you so much.