

Somewhere In Medeiros Time



I have been a dancer since age three hailing from Boston, Mass. Trained classically, and in all types of dance but through a series of interesting events I ended up being a ballroom dancer. Let me begin.

At age sixteen I had just won a beauty pageant-talent contest in downtown Boston at the John Hancock building. It was called "Little Miss Lovely." It had age categories for all. I was in the 15-18 year old age division. After two days of competition one of the prizes besides a new stereo was a scholarship to the Hart Modeling Agency located in Boston. I attended a series of summer classes in TV spokesperson, fashion, commercials, make-up and acquired my first set of head shots. Our graduation was a big runway show for all to attend. As we were rehearsing this graduation I told the

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director that I would dance and be happy to choreograph the whole thing. She seemed surprised a little reluctant but agreed. I chose the song from Sly and the Family Stone called "Dance To The Music." Everyone including the graduates performed and loved it. I graduated with honors but decided I was not a model but a dancer So I continued my training in the Boston area. I would drive home at night either by myself or with a family member and we would pass a studio in Wellesley Mass. called The Mary French Dance Studio. I would always see the ballroom dancers taking class through the huge glass windows as we drove by and I loved it! This continued for a few more years and by this time I was attending Mass Bay Community College still in Wellesley and still passing by Mary French Dance Studio. One day out of the blue the director of the Hart Modeling Agency called me. She was opening up her own agency and wanted me to conduct some classes for her in movement, poise and runway walk for her new students. She was renting space at the you guessed it... Mary French Dance Studio. I showed up with the correct paperwork in hand and began the Saturday morning lessons. In between classes I would walk around the room and stare at the pictures on the wall. I always stopped in front of this one picture and was just mesmerized by the energy of this couple. Now of course I adored Sissy and Bobby from the Lawrence Welk Show but there was something about this man in the picture. He had a Valentino, Elvis Presley charisma way about him.

I graduated college in 1977 ready to head to Broadway and through a series of karmic events ended up dancing with Mr. Richard Diaz as a professional ballroom dance couple instead. Competing in the American Style which at the time was Foxtrot, Swing, Bolero and Mambo. Mr. Diaz had recently left the Fred Astaire chain already an established champion but because we were an independent team were excluded from all the wonderful coaching available to the chain couples. So we traveled to New York regularly, took Afro-Cuban Jazz classes with all the greats at the time and went clubbing at the Corso to practice all the rhythms with live latin bands and music. With that under our belts we became proficient in the Mambo and known for our unique style and rhythms.

So lets move forward to about 1982 or 1983 to a competition that was being held at the Bradford Hotel again in downtown Boston. We were in the final and we placed third. First was the amazing Charlie and Jean Penatello, second was Patrick Taverna and Rebecca Francour. BUT we had taken straight first's in the Mambo across the board. I remember the competition like yesterday.

After the competition was over a very dark haired man approached me pointed his finger at me and said "You, your my girl! And the only woman on the floor! Be downstairs tomorrow morning to partner me in my seminar". I didn't think anything of it since I had never met the man but in the back of mind there was something so familiar about him. I just couldn't connect it up. Toward the end of the evening when we were winding down I mentioned to Mr. Diaz about what this man had said and I described him with this huge black mane of hair like a lion. Mr. Diaz's eyes popped out of his head and calmly told me I had been picked out of the crowd by none other than the greatest latin dancer in the world Mr. Bob Medeiros. And then it dawned on me where I had seen him

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before pictures of him and Sheryn Hawkins were all over the walls of Mary French's studio. I showed up the next day we danced a Bolero for the crowd I had never experienced anything like him before in my world and of course I was smitten for life. He became my mentor, coach, confident and friend and he skillfully guided myself and Mr. Diaz to become the first world champions for the United States in Mambo. The rest is history.

I was honored to have been asked to contribute an article for the fortieth anniversary issue of Dance Week so I wrote about Bobby. I met the brilliant Dr. Charles Zwerling owner and producer of this publication through Medeiros. Proving again we are all connected by six degrees of separation.

I just returned from the DBDC held this past September at the ParkPlaza Hotel in Boston, where I was privileged to have been co-presenter of the Bob Medeiros perpetual Professional Latin Award. How ironic is that? At the end of it all we circled back ending up in our home town where we were both born and where our careers first began so many years ago.

Interestingly enough I don't think I ever told Medeiros of how I first encountered him and his pictures back in my youth even after all the years we shared together. But I know he knows as Pat and I presented his award looking down guiding us all and dancing for joy in heaven. Still reaching me from the big picture up above. For you see "Somewhere in Medeiros Time" is all the time. He is truly timeless.

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