

CRAZY FOOT FUN!

Andi Earls, girlfriend of the well known choreographer Cato Larsen, recently attended a Line dance event in Japan. As Cato is from Norway and Andi lives in Hawaii, they have to plan to meet up at dance events.



Cato was the guest instructor at the 18th Crazy Country Dance Festival held in Tajimi, Japan last November. Craig Bennett was also there and they all met up with Martha Ogasawara, one of the event organisers, at the Nagoya airport. Here is Andi's report on the event.

Our trip began the day before the event. We met up with a group of 17 dancers from Korea and along with some Japanese dancers we all went on a one-day bus tour to the city of Gujo Hachiman, followed by a visit to a plastic food sample factory where we had the chance to make our own little meal – complete with shrimp tempura, a head of lettuce and even a beautiful candle as a decoration.

Things started right on time Saturday with a nice warm up session complete with stretching. Our first workshop was Craig's 'Be a Little Selfish' - definitely the most challenging dance of the weekend. Craig would demo eight counts at a time, breaking them down and translating them for the group. I was impressed how the front rows would all squat down so the back of the room could see what Craig was doing. Also the dancers would rotate their lines so the front would move to the back and everyone would then get a chance to be in the front row. It was a fantastic idea and one I will take with me for future events.

Lunch was then served – the room was quickly transformed, the dance floor was

filled with tables and chairs in a matter of minutes. We had 30 minutes for lunch, THE perfect amount of time for die hard dancers who did not want to spend any more time off the floor than they had too.

The afternoon continued with Craig and Cato alternating. Cato started with one of Michael Barr's hits 'It's Amazing'. Craig challenged us again with 'Love Don't Run' and Cato taught one of my favorites for about a year now, 'Beer or Gasoline'. We ended the day with the very cute upbeat dance of Craig's - 'Mr Wonderful'.

After a quick change of clothes, the evening began in earnest with the big Line dance Party. We were treated to amazing demos – a beautiful ballroom performance



by Sam Arvidson and Toshiko Kawamoto, a group from Korea who started their performance with Cato's Am I? and an absolutely amazing number from the Xtreme Dance team. We were well and truly wowed.

As a list was posted with all of the



dances, many with a split floor there were no excuses for not dancing. One quick little break for dinner followed— there was a great variety of food set up along a few tables and it was a really nice way to chat with our new friends. Then of course we soon got back to dancing. On Thursday night Craig and I were able to attend the last half of one of Martha's classes where we had a chance to learn a dance called Beat of Your Heart. One of the highlights of my weekend was getting to dance it with the choreographers, Sam Arvidson and Toshiko Kawamoto.

But the party did not end there. Back at the hotel, the restaurant/cafeteria area was opened just for us and it was time to sample lots more food, beer and

homemade warm Sake. I cannot say too much about the evening but next time you see Craig, ask him a few questions! It was certainly a terrific way to wind down the evening.

Sunday was a nice laid back day. The dances were a little easier and of course



there were lots of time to review the dances from the day before. Cato started with 'Lookout' – which my class calls our Norwegian Irish song. As soon as you hear the music you will know why. A nice easy-ish waltz, 'Know Me By Now' from Craig was next. Then back to Cato with 'Caterina'. The story of this special dance started out when I was teaching at a small local event on Maui. I had asked him for a high Beginner level dance and my Mom became very ill then. She sadly passed away from cancer in June and Cato dedicated the dance to her memory. He told this story to all the dancers before teaching it. I, of course spent the lesson trying not to cry but got many hugs and nice comments from the dancers which made me feel much better.

I was very impressed with how well run this event was. If there were any problems or wrinkles we were not aware of them, everyone was so kind and made sure we were comfortable and had everything we needed. I can only say that all who attended really had a fine time.



Again I was reminded of how lucky we are to be a part of this wonderful, worldwide Line dance family. Anywhere you go – you always feel at home on the dance floor. But ultimately, it has to be another big thank you to the Crazy Foot Dancers for such a memorable experience – my love and aloha to you all.

