



A year later, I moved back to Randers, and got a job at a record shop, where I stayed for several years. However, I couldn't forget about Line dancing, and seeing that there was no place that offered classes, I decided to start my own classes. I contacted a local dance studio and they agreed to rent me one of their ballrooms on a Sunday afternoon, and this is how my club called Cowboys & Angels, just like the Garth Brooks song, was born. I advertised in the paper, and the first time about 20 people showed up, half of them people I already knew, but from there, the word spread about this new dance craze, and things got rolling with more and more people, and more and more classes. In January 2004 I went to my first Line dance World Championships in Nashville, visited the Wild Horse Saloon, and also, unbeknownst to everyone at home, got married to my long-time girlfriend Lykke.

My journey from being a social dancer and teacher to a competitor at Worlds actually started in 2001, when I witnessed the Superstars of Line dance in action for the very first time. Right then and there, I knew in what direction I wanted to take my dancing. Superstars like Roy Verdonk, Raymond Sarlemijn, Roy Hadisubroto and Emily Drinkall have been very inspirational for me. Besides being great dancers, they also have great personalities, and I have had the pleasure of meeting all of them.

After a few years, I quit my job at the record shop, and tried out a few other things. I had an online video and DVD shop, and I did some translating and subtitling for TV. After about a year of doing that, I decided to go back to school to get a higher education, and at the same time try to concentrate on dancing. In 2005 I graduated with honours from the Danish Business Academy majoring in sports and events management, and a few months later I opened my own dance studio, where I now teach classes almost every day.

October 2005 was the month I published *The Line Dance Way*, my very own line dance DVD. I had worked for about six months in a record company as a part of my education, and upon leaving, it took little convincing for me to make them sign me for the DVD project. I have always been into music and movies, especially horror and science fiction, and I have a huge CD and DVD collection, with the Star Wars box set being my most prized possession. My favourite TV shows used to be *The X-Files* and *NYPD Blue*, and of the ones running now I follow *Heroes* and *Lost*, and re-runs of *The Wonder Years*. My favourite movie director is John Carpenter and my favourite actors are Kurt Russell and Harrison Ford.

One of my other hobbies is pro. wrestling. I watch it on TV whenever possible, but I am also an active performer.

Line dancing is obviously a big part of my life. I have had the pleasure of dancing and teaching many wonderful dances. My all-time favourites include the *Midnight Waltz*, *Vivacious*, *Rock My Life Away* and *Stay Forever*, and most recently *On a Good Night*, *Paint Me a Birmingham* and *Give It Back*.

I like to choreograph dances as well. My most popular dances are *Forever and Ever*, *Neon Moon*, *Can You Feel the Love Tonight*, *All About the Money*, *At the Line Dance* and *Bad Man*. When I choreograph new dances, I find that the ones that turn out the best are the ones that just come to me literally out of nowhere, and to music that I have been listening to for a long time and know inside out. The dance *Forever and Ever* by Randy Travis' classic *Forever and Ever, Amen*, came to me in the middle of the night, so I got up, wrote it all down, and the very next day I didn't even have to change a thing. Likewise, the track *Neon Moon* by Brooks and Dunn has always been

a favourite of mine, and I always wanted to make a dance to it, and one day when I was just messing around and trying out new dances, the steps suddenly came to me. The music inspires me, and my advice to other choreographers would be to stick with music that means something, and just write down what comes first to mind, and to keep it simple.

When it comes to music for Line dancing, I use all kinds of different music; country, pop, latin, funk, you name it. When I'm home, I almost always listen to country music. My favourites include Trisha Yearwood, Alan Jackson, Johnny Cash, Alison Krauss, Kenny Chesney and Rascal Flatts. I also like less mainstream artists like Kevin Welch, who I have met a few times.

I have been fortunate to visit many countries as I go to different Line dance competitions and do workshops. I have made a lot of new friends and acquaintances through Line dancing. I enjoy all the aspects; teaching, competing and just dancing for the fun of it. My ultimate dream is to become a World Champion Line dancer. It is a dream that I have been chasing for the last five years, and I do not plan on letting it go anytime soon.

In December 2006 my daughter Lea was born, which is definitely the biggest thing to happen in my life so far.

All the best,
Benny

