



SIMON'S **Swing Notes**

Welcome to Swing Notes where I will be musing about life in the swing world, commenting on what's going on and more often than not, the why & how you can get the most out of your dancing.

Diving into the annals of history & traditions that have been handed down to me, the aim is to be educational, thought-provoking & occasionally controversial, sharing my thoughts on the dance, music, history & today's swing dance scene.

Be warned - they will seriously improve your dancing!

Simon's Swing Notes 331: Memorable

Venues By Simon Selmon

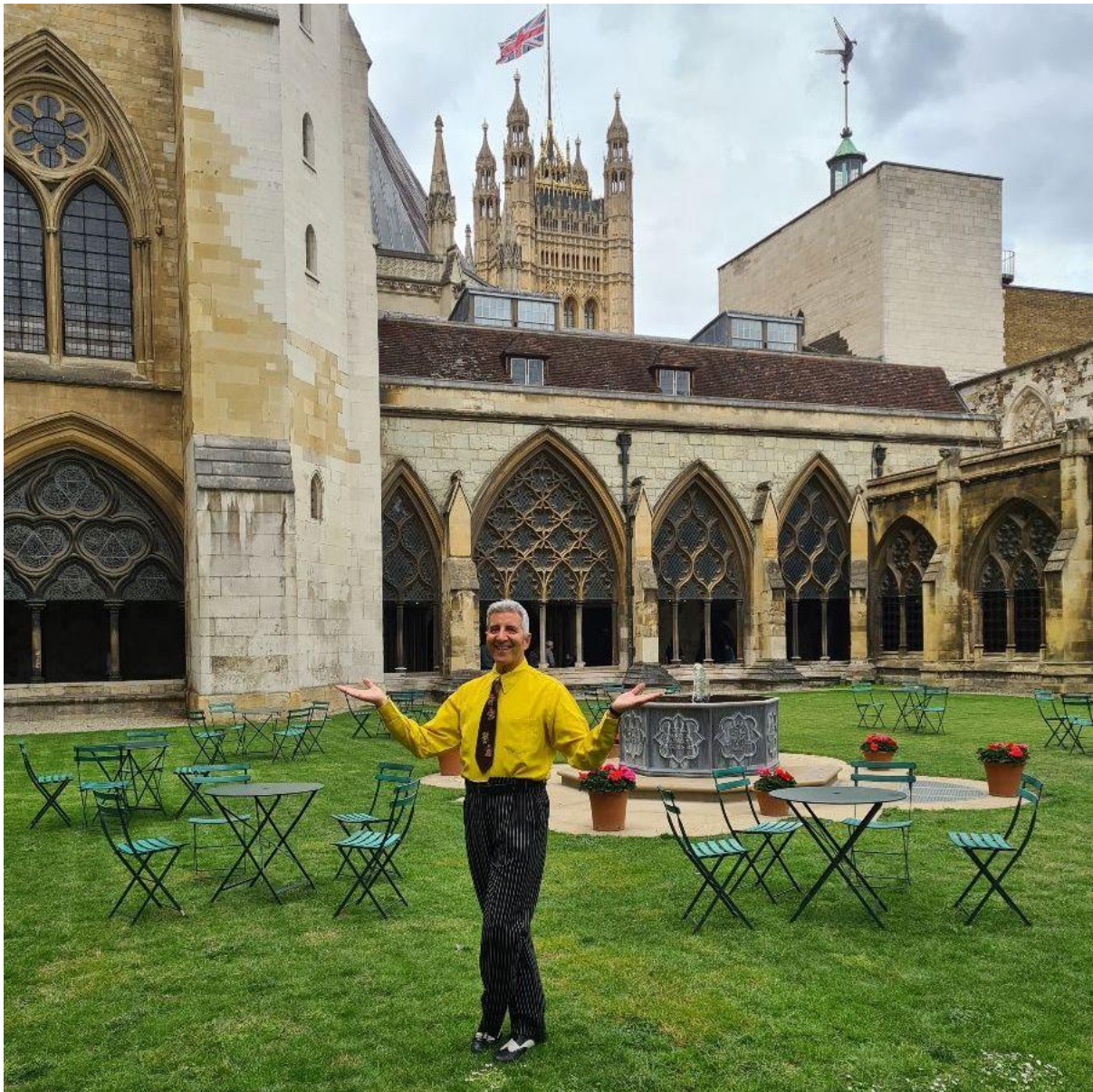
Where have you Swung out?

I have to say, Swing dance has taken me to some pretty exciting places. I've met people, done things, attended events I never would have without Swing.

As I was dancing in the cloister gardens of Westminster Abbey earlier this week (name drop!), I kept thinking how it was highly likely that Anna & I were the first people ever to do a Swing Out on its hallowed ground.

Surrounded by its stunning Gothic architecture and founded by Benedictine monks in 960AD, this building even predates the ancient Lindy Hop!! A few days prior to this, Jo Pickering and myself were dancing at RAF Hendon, surrounded by 1940s Spitfires and de Havilland Mosquitos, and earlier that month we spent a day dancing in the Kings Cross Station Hall, just a hop,

skip & a jump from the Harry Potter 9 ¾ photo booth, to the amusement and bemusement of all the tourists and train passengers.



Welcome to Westminster Abbey, ready for the dance.

Another venue which stands out for me was hosting a dance at The Painted Hall in Greenwich, which is part of the Old Naval College. With over 3,700 square metres of Baroque walls and ceilings, painted between 1707 and 1726, they had to get special permission to dance on their floor (strictly no heels allowed!), but what a thrill! Then again, if we want to talk paintings, then the Raphael Gallery at the Victoria and Albert museum was an unusual surrounding, although not as impressive as

teaching on stage at the Royal Abert Hall to a packed audience (Vicky would have been delighted I'm sure).



Painted Hall, Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich.

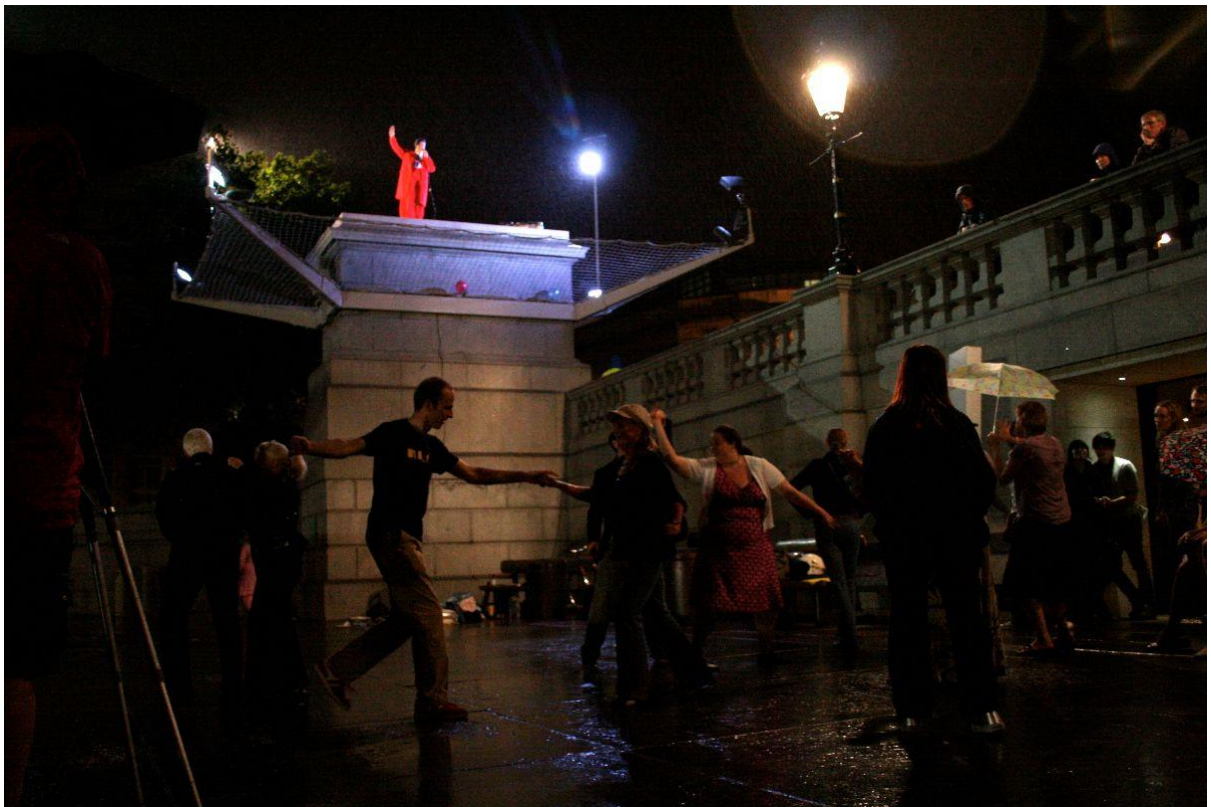
We've danced at the Tower of London (they let us out!) and on Tower Bridge (don't look down). We've danced in bunkers, on battle ships and American military bases, in museums and places of history across the world, on film sets and stages, and all sorts of funny places (I recall a very narrow catwalk just off Leicester square, just wide enough for a careful Swing Out) but I think the most unusual was on a plinth in Trafalgar Square – being lifted up by crane for the One & Other public art project by Anthony Gormley in 2009.

One Christmas, I remember flying in a small plane from Seattle airport to Port Townsend to teach at the Wild Week dance camp. The snow was falling and I had never seen so many Christmas lights from the sky – it was a sight to behold.

I had the privilege to dance in the historic and picturesque Art Deco Catalina Casino ballroom on Catalina Island, which must be one of the most beautiful and

impressive Ballrooms I have ever danced in which is in stark contrast to the one venue I will never forget. This was a very non-descript office block in Harlem, New York, back in 1986. As I went up in the lift, I was a little apprehensive as to where I was being taken. No signs on the door, and from the outside it definitely didn't look like a place for a dance. Yet when the lift doors opened and the music bled through, I knew it was going to be special. As I walked in, it was like coming home! Granted, there were only a handful of people my age in the room (it was really a dance for people who used to go to the Savoy Ballroom which closed in 1958), but I felt so comfortable and welcomed that night that it cemented my love for this dance – the Lindy Hop!







- Got a question about Swing dance you would like me to discuss in a future Swing Notes? **Ask me anything!** Technical, topical or historical, email mail@swingdanceuk.com
- Need help with your dancing? **Send in a video of your dancing** then book an online Zoom private session, email simon@swingdanceuk.com
- Book Simon for a weekend workshop or your festival, email simon@swingdanceuk.com

Your partner in learning to dance

Swingcerely yours,

Simon & Anna Selmon

Sharing the Lindy love

Contact simon@swingdanceuk.com