

DARREN MITCHELL



We are thrilled this month to introduce you to Darren Mitchell, instructor and choreographer from Australia.

Darren comes from a non-line dancing background and his parents were never dancers and his two younger brothers certainly would never venture onto a dance floor anywhere at any time!

Darren's love of horses and Country music is the reason why he became involved in line dancing. He further explains 'My life revolved around me and my horses competing each weekend at local shows and it was at one particular show that I first saw Line Dancing being done. The fact it was Country music and you didn't need a partner drew me into it straight away'.

Darren attended his first class and he was overawed by the amount of people that were there. Two further classes followed in the same week. 'I guess you could say I was well and truly hooked' Darren says.

After attending classes for approximately six months, Darren was asked by the owner of the club whether he would like to become an instructor. 'NO! was my first response'.

Darren continues 'There was no way I could get up in front of all those people and talk let alone teach them a dance. After the owner persisting, Darren decided to give it a go; his first teach was to a crowd of around 160 dancers. He taught Gordon Elliott's dance 'Third Rock From The Sun', extremely nervous but managed to get through it and has never looked back.

'I now run a very successful club Cheyenne On Queue and I have been teaching for 26 years. I have eight classes a week ranging from Absolute Beginners through to Intermediate classes and I love each and every one of them dearly. They are like family and quite a good percentage of my students have been with me for those 26 years'.



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Lonely Drum

Darren became involved with choreography about 17 years ago after his first ever dance **'Kansas No More'**. From then on, he got the bug and has had some success with dances such as **'Words'**, **'I Need You Now'** and many others including **'Man Of My Word'** co-choreographed with Jennifer Hughes. This won **Australian Dance Of The Year** in 2011.

We asked Darren who has been his inspiration - 'There have been many people over the years but three people that have had a huge part in my dancing career are Simon Ward and Gordon Elliott and more recently, Maddison Glover. These three amazing people have been there to answer the hard questions and also to give me advice when needed and I can't thank them enough'.

Darren's recent dance **'Lonely Drum'** has become a hugely successful dance and has taken the world by storm.

'I had a workshop weekend coming up and I was looking for a piece of music that everyone could enjoy. I heard this piece of music from Aaron Goodvin and just loved it straight away, so I put a dance together. It just fell into place and thought it was too simple and that no one would like it. How wrong was I'.

Darren concludes 'It has been an amazing journey with Lonely Drum. It has been taught all around the world and I would like to thank all the instructors and dancers that have made it the success it is today. Not bad for a dance that I was never going to release. I hopefully, one day, look forward to catching up with everyone and dancing Lonely Drum on the floor with you all'.

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