

(1) As far as it can be traced has derived from the folk dance of different countries - the Tango from Argentine etc.  
Do you think Ballroom dance, through its emphasis on style and precision of movement has lost much of its original spirit and spontaneous character?

No. Throughout history mankind has had a spirit that rebels against over-conformity. So with Ballroom Dancing. Even its most rigorous form - i.e Old Time & Victorian Sequence has had the same thing happen. Modern Sequence & Latin Sequence, whilst conforming to the 16 bar format, has largely broken away from the shackles of over conformity in terms of foot, head and arm and leg movements. Indeed, so popular has this become that in certain areas it has largely replaced the original Old Time Sequence.

In addition to Modern & Latin, the opposite might even be said to be true. The constant search for longer, higher, faster, and the adoption of Ballet type moves does more to take away the character of the dance than any emphasis on style and precision. This goes in cycles, so that every few years judges will go back to basics, and place an emphasis on the character of the dance whilst marking, so that cheeky competitors quickly learn to return to the basics.

Medal tests also ensure that the majority of those learning dance acquire knowledge of and respect for the character and movement of each dance.

Q) What do you believe to be most important, a natural rhythm and flare for dance or the ability to learn the formats and rules set, and when judging is the most important consideration, originality or how accurately the dances are carried out?

The international criteria for judging are very clear on this. The fields for adjudication are

1. Timing and Basic Rhythm
2. Body Lines
3. Movement
4. Rhythmic Interpretation.
5. Footwork.

No 1 is of primary importance and takes precedence over all the others. The others are of equal importance to each other.

The dancer must adhere to the timing of the dance, movement being neither before or after, but on the beat. It is only after the judge is satisfied that the Timing is correct that other criteria apply.

This becomes ~~obvious~~ obvious when the basic definition of dance i.e. moving in time with music, is considered.

3) Are ballroom dances, (for example the Tango), restricted to a set format or are they a type of dance which can be interpreted by the different styles of the dancer?

Whilst all the dances have a series of basic movement characteristics of the dance, there is ample room for individual interpretation in how these are strung together. The only exception to this is the Old Time and Victorian Sequence section, where all the elements are prescribed.

Within Modern (Standard) and Latin Dancing the combinations are endless, hence each competitor having his or her own personal routine, generally put together after years of working to find what <sup>is</sup> the most suitable routines and variations for that couple.

4) What function does costume play and are the different styles of clothes important in Ballroom?

Costume is only important in the Amateur scene if all other things are equal, the judge may use appearance as the deciding factor.

Its function is mainly to enhance the ability to preserve the line and character of the dance, hence the major difference between the Modern and Latin costume. The modern costume, tails and long dress, help to display the style and elegance of the dances.

The Latin costume, catsuit and figure hugging dress with minimal skirt, frequently built around a body stocking show off the hip and body movements which are essential to the character of the Latin dances. In addition it allows the much greater freedom needed for the open leg movements.

For Professionals, where the hard demonstration is the main display, the colourful and exotic costumes are more for the entertainment of the spectator than anything else.

5) What do you think the function of Ballroom dance is today , is it merely a means of entertainment that gains or loses popularity with every generation, Does it have scope to evolve further within itself or is it lightly bound by it's own dance etiquette ?

Ballroom Dancing today has evolved into a very tough competitive sport - hence the term Ballroom Dancing is disappearing, being replaced by Sportdance. The International Olympic Council have accepted it as such. They were somewhat amazed to discover that each dance is the equivalent of a 200 metre ~~sprint~~ sprint, that couples do 5 of these consecutively with only 15 seconds separating each dance, and that they may do 5 or more consecutive rounds in a competition. No skater would attempt this. What militates against it as a sport is the dancers' ability to make it look effortless, whilst they are straining every muscle to achieve maximum performance.

There is still a great deal of scope for future evolution. The whole grading / adjudication system needs to change from the very subjective "relative performance against each other" to a more objective - "performance against a standard".