

# Alexander Ugolev



I was photographed against the background of the poster of a dancing school in Leningrad. I don't remember who took this picture. It was approximately in 1958.

The school was located in the House of Culture. The headteacher was Dmitriy Mikhailovich Belsky, a well-known and talented teacher. Later I became his assistant on a voluntary basis. Sometimes I was invited to perform in the park. There was a dancing study group too. Its manager was Dmitriy Pavlovich Baranovsky. I assisted him also.

After the end of the International Youth Festival in Moscow in 1957 I took a great interest in professional dancing. Up to then I played volleyball – since 1949. At that time I worked at the central design office no. 34, in the new office building on Borovaya Street. When our office was moved to 'Arsenal' enterprise, I played volleyball for 'Arsenal' championship; I was a skilled volleyball player.

One day I was going home from a training session and saw a large board with the following advertisement: 'Ball-room dancing parties.' There they studied to dance foxtrot and tango, and during the campaign against 'cosmopolitans', before 1957, these dances were forbidden as immoral and alien to the Soviet people. Young people had an opportunity to meet only at dancing classical dances. In the Palace of culture named after Gorky dancing parties went the following way: a Viennese waltz, a figured waltz, waltz galop, polonaise and mazurka, and in the end – final waltz. There were five or six polka dances. We didn't study Jewish dances. In the Vyborg palace of culture, Vladimir Shuvalin, a soloist of Alexandrov's ensemble performed a tailor's dance, which included elements of Jewish dances.