



Candy was born on November 12, 1979 in Santo Domingo DR, but raised in Jersey City New Jersey. Her given name is Candida Mena, but her friends call her Candy for short. Since she was a little girl, Candy always displayed a talent for understanding her physical capabilities. She was raised on Gymnastics and her many years of relentless hours of cheerleading. It wasn't until she was out of school that she realized her talent for salsa.

In September of 1998 she attended a fund-raiser at the local boys club. This is where she first saw Ismael Otero. After seeing him dance, she took his information and put it in her purse. On October 26, 1998, Candy took her very first steps to becoming a salsaera.

After taking class for 3 weeks, Ismael realized that he had found a natural. She picked up the moves so quickly that he asked her to join his dance group Carribean Soul. On April 11, 1999, after only 6 months of dancing, Ismael took her to the Eddie Torres Monthly social where she had a dance with Jai Catalano. This dance would soon prove to change her life forever.

By July of 1999 Candy amicably parted ways with Carribean Soul. The following month she started dancing with Jai Catalano in the Eddie Torres troupe. After a year and a half of dancing with a new dance team, she opened Jai & Candy Salsa Dance Studio, now called Estilo Clasico. Today, Candy is now dancing with Juan Matos and is co-director of Fogarate Dance Project. They are living and working in Milan, Itay.

Juan "Pachanga" Matos

Juan "Pachanga" Matos born in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, came to the United States in April of 1996. This young boy did not know what he was in for. Within three years he has become one of New York's top male dancers.

Not of legal age yet, Juan started visiting the clubs. He would go to watch his parents whom at the time in Santo Domingo were the top leading hustle dancers. They were his prime example and inspiration of dancing. Dancing slowly became Juan's dream. He was never quite sure about

what dance he wanted to peruse, until he saw mambo. His introduction tomambo was in 1997. He visited Victor "La Magica" Pacheco's class. Just after 2 months of going to mambo classes Juan was forced to take a break from class due to a back injury. After being noticed at a club, social dancing, with only street knowledge and little technique, Juan was able to learn and perform a whole mambo routine in less then seven days. A lot of hard work and dedication took Juan to a bigger step towards becoming a part of a group called, "Magic Combination Dancers."

At the beginning of 2000, Juan was invited to join a dance group, directed by Osmar Perrones. A couple of months later, Juan was invited to train with, "Santo Rico Dance Company" (founder Wilton Beltre and directed by Thomas Guerrero). After a year of training with Santo Rico Dance Company, Juan developed what is now call "Pachanga style." This unique style is what has put him in the eyes of the New York's mambo scene. Whether it is during a social dance or a dance performance, Juan is considered to be one of the best and hottest dancers of his generation. Natural talent, pure, smooth, classic, and fast feet best describes this talented young man. He has begun to teach internationally. He plans to travel to continue to share his mambo talent with the world.