

In memory of Sabine Kacha

It must have been a good 7 years ago now that I joined Social Rueda Sydney, along with my friend Nicolette. We were pretty new to it and we were welcomed into this motley crew of salsa dance enthusiasts. Sabine was a core member along with 6 or 7 others, some of whom are here today. She never missed a session. These were the halcyon days where we not only met on Sundays for 2 hours, but got together on Thursday evenings, plus Fridays at lunchtime. Sometimes the sessions went on for far longer than 2 hours, dancing past the fading light, and in summer fending off mosquitoes in Hyde Park and even during hammering rain in the undercover spot.

Sabine, in her gentle and quiet way, was a mainstay of this group. She provided continuity, was always eager to learn and practice new steps and was unrelentingly overjoyed when a bachata came on. In fact, if it weren't for Sabine, nothing would have persuaded me to take part in a bachata, a dance and music form different to salsa, the music being a little schmaltzy for my taste, but to see how thrilled and enthusiastic she was, how could I turn her down? (I think this was a recurring theme!)

One of my enduring memories is her reaction when you arrived at rueda. Her face would light up when she saw you, (providing she was there first), when she literally jumped for joy, clapping and saying, "yay", so happy was she to know people were coming to join in.

To say she was an original person would be a ridiculous unstatement. Quirky, intelligent, sensitive, honest, earnest, without guile or even ego, she had a strong sense of mission in coming to Australia to volunteer with First Nations communities, and a strong drive to dance. I suppose you could say she was single minded. Never seeing her outside of our dancing get-togethers, those were the two principle things I really knew about her.

She was a great dance partner, as she could both lead and follow, usually preferring the former. Very handy in the likely event there were not enough fellows to go around. She was not a dance 'stylist' as such, I think it was the sheer fun, fresh air, sense of community, and the challenge to learn new things that she embraced, as much as any affinity for the music and the art form.

It didn't take long to feel part of the Sydney rueda family and it was a delight and privilege to have met and got to know a little of Sabine. I know I speak for every one of our cohort when I say she has already been and will continue to be very sadly missed.