

Family display team thrill crowds with their amazing dancing horses

Stallions rock and roll

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EQUESTRIAN EDITOR

THE spotlight fell on the Rexion Performing Ponies yesterday as the family-run display team from Lewdown wowed the audience at their Devon County Show debut.

The team, headed by chief trainer and handler Rachael Grylls, still have to pinch themselves that they have hit the county show circuit quite so quickly.

"We've been performing and perfecting our art for two-and-a-half years," says 27-year-old Rachael who was inspired by the horse display team, Apassionata, and has since featured on the programme Britain's Got Talent as well as at local events.

Spectators at the Devon show were treated to an upbeat performance to the chart topper, Reach for the Stars, which starred Rachael's six-year-old daughter Angelina and seven-year-old nephew Jason, with two of the Rexion Stud's American Miniature Horse stallions.

'We're hoping this will take off nationally'

"It's incredible to watch them dance and jive now – only last year they would stand back and clap – they have come on so much," said Patsy Grylls who is costume maker and commentator on the day.

"It was tempting to take them to dance lessons but we didn't, otherwise we can't lay claim to the fact that it is all done in-house."

In the afternoon, Rachael and the team's star attraction, Trevarth Black Lad, a Welsh section D stallion, gave a theatrical display to the musical Grease.

They were then joined by Rexion's rock chick Kaylee Blight in a Rock 'n' Roll rendition complete with motorbike, leathers and guitar.

A change of tempo signalled their grand finale. With the heart-rending



● **SPECIAL BOND:** Rachael Grylls with Trevarth Black Lad, performing to the sounds of Grease

song, One Moment in Time, Rachael and Black Lad captivated the crowd in a classical performance focusing on the incredible bond between them.

"The last act always brings a tear to my eye," added Patsy. "From day one the training has been done through kindness, patience and understanding. The stallion is completely besotted with Rachael – a bomb could go off when they are working together and neither would notice as they are so in tune with one another."

Behind the scenes are more members

of the Grylls family, including Rachael's husband Sean who builds the props.

"I admit we were all a bit nervous before the show. This is our make or break!" smiled Sean.

"We were so taken aback we trembled when the show secretary called us for an audition before booking us."

Patsy added: "We have progressed so much that we are almost embarrassed to look back at our original DVD."

The stud, which has more than 60 breeding stock at home, prides itself on

using stallions for its displays. "We have gone against the rule on this one – people say you can't train them so well and that they lose concentration easily, but we have proved otherwise plus they have a bit more presence about them."

"We have given our boys a job to do alongside their stud duties."

The passion for performing ponies has been well and truly ignited.

"We're hoping this will take off nationally and that we can travel to the bigger shows."