

Cherie Lunghi as
Matron Eva LuckesEva with her
nursing staff

I hate all the blood

Cherie Lunghi admits she can't cope with the gory scenes in *Casualty 1909*

everything is available to know what's going on inside the body and brain, we take anaesthetic for granted, and the aftercare.'

Before her appearance on *Strictly* last year, Cherie was best known for *The Manageress* and for starring in the Kenco coffee ads. But since partnering James Jordan on the dance floor her profile has soared.

'It's the most popular thing I've ever been involved in,' Cherie reveals. 'People in general are incredibly nice. Every day I'm stopped by somebody or other and paid a compliment.'

In a show where she faced much younger rivals, including Lisa Snowdon, Rachel Stevens and Jodie Kidd, a then 56-year-old Cherie more than held her own both in the dancing and glamour stakes. Many tipped her to win but she made a surprise exit in week

nine, a result that left Cherie with one regret.

'There's a bit of unfinished business there because had James and I not been voted off, the next week we would have done the Argentine tango and I was very much looking forward to that,' adds Cherie, who performed on the *Strictly* live tour earlier this year.

'I didn't get to do my tango but I believe there are some classes a walk from my house, so maybe in the autumn I shall venture forth and get my Argentine tango lessons organised!'

Currently filming a third series of *Secret Diary Of A Call Girl* with Billie Piper, Cherie is hoping that *Casualty 1909* will also be recommissioned. And it's not just her own career that she's keeping tabs on. Her daughter Nathalie, with film

Cherie with her
Strictly dance
partner James

director Roland Joffe, has had a solid start to her acting career, starring as Princess Isabelle in *The Palace*, and with Andrew Lincoln in BBC3's *The Things I Haven't Told You* last year.

'I'm very proud of her,' Cherie states. 'It would be nice to work together at some point in the future. We're not actively looking but it would be nice if one day it came along!'

Nick Fiaca

With her sultry and elegant dance moves, Cherie Lunghi sashayed her way into the nation's hearts in *Strictly Come Dancing*. But there couldn't be more of a contrast as Cherie ditches the glamour to reprise her role as London Hospital's stern-faced Matron Eva Luckes in the drama *Casualty 1909*.

While Cherie enjoys working on the show, one aspect does leave the actress feeling a little queasy though!

'I could never have worked as a nurse... I'm not that good with gore,' she admits.

'There have been a couple of times in the past when I have fainted at the sight of fake blood. I have actually passed out. But I'm starting to get a bit better than I used to be.'

'Of course you do see all the false severed limbs being made in the make-up room and we have a laugh about it. When you see it on set though, you need a powerful imagination to forget that it's not real.'

Based in London's East End during the early 20th century, *Casualty 1909* is set against the political and social changes of the time, while many of the medical advances we take for granted don't exist. It's also decades before the NHS, so the hospital has to fund itself.

Ironically, Cherie has also appeared in the modern-day *Casualty* as Professor Camille Windsor, so she's seen the contrast between an Edwardian and modern hospital.

'Obviously people going into medicine have always been dedicated,' she says.

'You walk into an operating theatre in 1909 and it's closer to medieval medicine than it is to modern medicine. Today,

'There have been times when I've fainted at the sight of fake blood!'