



The Folk Dancer

The Official Newsletter of the BYU Folk Dance Alumni



Fall 2025

Upcoming Events

World of Dance

- Sept. 25-27
 - Marriott Center, Provo
 - arts.byu.edu

Christmas Around the World

- Dec. 5 @ 7:30pm
- Dec. 6 @ 2pm & 7:30pm
- Marriott Center, Provo, UT
- arts.byu.edu
- Tickets on sale Oct. 29

CAW Alumni Reception

- Dec. 6 @ 4pm
- Gordon B. Hinckley Alumni Center Assembly Hall
- We look forward to seeing you there!!



Apiro, Italy

Summer Tour: By The Numbers

- 28 dancers
- 6 musicians
- 4 leaders
- 18 performances
- 12 parades
- 2 children's outreach workshops
- 1 dancing and music in the square (2.5 hours)
- 1 Italian flag workshop
- 2 cultural foods days (we prepared chili, cornbread, and S'mores)
- 1 anthropology conference
- Many cultural outings
- So much Gelato that it cannot be counted!!



The Festivals of Italy

by Jeanette Geslison, IFDE Artistic Director

This summer, the Brigham Young University Folk Dance Ensemble and Mountain Strings were fortunate to attend two international folk dance festivals in Italy from July 22-Aug. 16. We were one of 7 groups at the Latium Festival in Cori, Italy. Then we attended the Terranostra Festival in Apiro, Italy. There were 6 dance groups at this festival.

LATIUM Festival:

Our BYU group first attended the Latium festival in 1980 and then again in 2007. The townspeople of Cori (an old Roman city from the 6th century BC situated on top of a tall hill) still remembered our group! In fact, one gentleman came to me when he saw our



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Performing at the Colosseum



Visiting Pompeii



Hercules Tempe in Cori, Italy

group walking down the street and asked if I knew Colleen Anderson (from the 1980 tour). I was so impressed and was happy to tell him that I do know Colleen. He told me that he helped teach our group the Italian flags in 1980. The director of the group from Puerto Rico (Mimi) knew Mary Bee Jensen and told me that they had been at festivals together in the past. She was very excited to meet our group again.

Highlights:

- Learning the Italian flags from one of the local Cori groups Rampante.
- Performing in the front of the Colosseum in Rome.
- Performing at Villa d'Este Renaissance Gardens in Tivoli.
- Visiting Rome, Pompeii, and the isle of Capri.
- Music jams with the Mexican group and other groups.



Nate Cox



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TERRANOSTRA Festival:

This is the first time our group has been to the Terranostra festival in Apiro. We LOVED our time here! We were warmly and enthusiastically welcomed. It was the 52nd year of this festival. Another beautiful small town on top of a hill in the middle of the most serene countryside.

Highlights:

- The wonderful family friendly atmosphere in Apiro.
- Performing at the local Eldorado waterpark (the owner is a main sponsor for the festival). Probably our first ever performance at a water park!
- Jamming with the local "Eurofolk" band.
- Turkish Black Sea dance workshop with the Nilüfer group from Bursa.
- Making friends with the local festival vendors.
- They loved when we played "The Battle hymn of the Republic."
- A local Russian lady told me in her broken English that "Your students are like sunshine."



Mountain Strings and Eurofolk jam session



Final performance in Apiro



Top two performing in Apiro.

Bottom: Turkish dance workshop with Nilüfer



Visiting Choreographers!

Several new pieces are being set on IFDE this fall.

August 27-28: Michael Malich & Aleksandra Dostanič

- They are from the Serbian Sumadija Ensemble in Milwaukee.
- They re-staged the Serbian "Dimitrovgrad" choreography that will be presented at this year's Christmas Around the World.



Michael & Aleksandra with IFDE

September 9-13: Ahmet Lüleci

- Ahmet re-staged his Turkish dance "Tides of Anatolia" for IFDE and the "Artvin" medley for Tier II Ensemble which will both be presented at Christmas Around the World.
- Ahmet will be returning for the concert to complete a documentary about our BYU folk dance program performing Turkish dances.



Ahmet teaching IFDE



Oct. 20-22: Henrik Larsen (dancer and teacher) and Kristian Bugge (fiddler)

- They will be creating a Danish folk dance choreography for IFDE for our *Journey* production.



New Canadian Dance Film

We have a new dance film to be released this fall! Attache Ta Tucque is a Canadian step dance featuring IFDE dancers and Mountain Strings. Watch for it soon!



Traditionz Recap

The Traditionz (formerly SPAC) 2025 team performed a show called "Fun and Games" this year. Our dances came from Colombia, Ukraine, USA, Slovakia, Turkey, South Africa, and Scandinavia. We explored how dancing can be a fun way to get exercise, get to know new people, and have fun with friends.

Of course, there are plenty of "fun and games" off the stage too! Some of our firsts were a teacher trying to ask a dancer out, a dancer getting locked in a bathroom for over an hour and missing an entire show, and a dancer standing on his bass in clogging shoes (while playing it) during Charleston!

Our 2026 calendar is filling up quickly. If you want to host a performance, please email us at BYU-Traditionz@byu.edu

Stay Connected

Visit our website at byufolkdancealumni.com to see Tour Histories, CAW programs and posters, newsletters, the archives, and more! We also have a "BYU Folk Dance Alumni" Facebook group. Join us!

Stay up-to-date with the current team:

- [BYU Folk Dance](#) on Facebook
- [byu_folkdance](#) on Instagram
- [byufolkdance](#) on Tiktok
- [BYU International Folk Dance](#) on Youtube



Aren't getting our emails? Then please email alumni@byufolkdancealumni.com



Doin' the Plan: Trusting in God's Love and Help

Our very own Amy Jex had the opportunity to speak at the BYU devotional on August 5, 2025! Amy is currently an associate teaching professor and associate chair in the Department of Dance. She also serves as artistic director of BYU Traditionz. Check out her devotional [here](#) and listen for a great story about the recent Traditionz tour.



Alumni Giving Opportunity

Please consider donating to the IFDE endowment fund to help fund future tours.

- Click [here](#) to donate.
- Click "Search Other Funds" and enter the code **301501376**.
- This pulls up the endowment fund "International Folk Dance Ensemble Touring - BYU".
- Click "+Add", then enter an amount in the appropriate box at the top of the page and continue filling out the form.



Announcements

- Can you believe it? BYU is celebrating [150 years](#) with the theme **Celebrate Gifts of Light**. There are many celebration events scheduled throughout the year. There's even ways to participate from afar! Check it out [here](#).
- Another anniversary... The College of Fine Arts and Communications is celebrating 100 years this year! Learn about important milestones and even contribute your own memories as part of the celebration [here](#)!
- We need your help! If you were on the 2003, 2018, 2020, 2022, 2023 teams, we still need help to finish the histories! Please email gjrawlings@gmail.com to find out how to help.
- We would love to increase the Mary Bee Jensen endowment to provide full tuition scholarships to two students each year (we currently provide 1/2 tuition scholarships to two students each year).
- In 2026 we mark 70 years of the BYU Folk Dance program! Get excited! More news to come!





Folk Dance Rewind: 1989-1990

As part of our newsletter, we would like to highlight some fun moments from years past. In 1990, the ensemble toured Canada and New England.



Danny Andrus, Murray Heidt, Ron Ludlow



Row 1: Nancy Whetton, Bryn Seymour, Denise Rader, Cheri Wride, Jeanette Karnil, Ruth Gardner, Kristen Pinegar
Row 2: Craig Stapley, Tucker Johnson, Danny Andrus, Jeff Madsen, Mike Horito, Wayne Wride



Eric Shurtleff, Craig Stapley, Ron Ludlow, Mike Horito, Murray Heidt, Mike Sandberg



Ge-Yao Liu with Chris Chipman, Wendy Wells, Caroline Johnston, Nancy Whetton, Gretchen Holgate, Kristen Pinegar



Folk Dance Rewind: 1989-1990



Jeanette Karnil & Dennis Wright - Photoshoot



Homecoming Parade



Homecoming Spectacular



Wayne Wide - Photoshoot



Ruth Gardner - CAW



Daryl Smith - CAW



Folk Dance Rewind: 1989-1990



Eric Seymour, Jeanette Karnil, ?, Wayne Wride,?, Kristen Pinegar, ?, ?, ?,
Dennis Wright, Daryl Smith, Bryn Seymour - Christmas Around the World



Hungarian - CAW



Hopak - Christmas Around the World



Tucker & Denise Johnson, Cheri Wride,
Nancy Whetton, Dale Madsen, Tamara Marshall



Kristen Pinegar & Wendy Wells with a
patient at St. John's Hospital Benefit



Whitmer Farm - Ed Austin, Steve
Buckley, Jeanette Karnil