

A Message to Folk Dance Alumni

Can you believe it's almost been a year since our 1994 Folk Dancers Alumni Reunion? The other day we *finally* paid off the last bill from the reunion, leaving us a little over \$1,000.00 in the fund. As promised, this money will be donated to the *Mary Bee Jensen Endowment*, which provides tuition scholarships for deserving folk dance students.

But with today's low interest rates, the money doesn't go as far as it used to. So, in addition to endowments, the Folk Dance program also needs direct cash contributions. Besides providing more full and partial tuition scholarships, they would like to have a way to assist outstanding students who would otherwise not be able to afford to go on summer tour. If you're like me, touring with the folk dancers was one of the most enriching and memorable experiences of your college years. And if you're like me, you probably couldn't have gone without some financial help.

Now's our chance to help make the dream of a summer tour a reality for some of the excellent dancers now in the program. The alumni committee has set a goal of raising enough money from alumni contributions to send two folk dancers on tour this next summer. That's about

\$1,800.00. The directors will help us select the two neediest and most deserving dancers, and the awards will be presented in the name of the folk dance alumni. If we are successful, we'd like to do this every year. Excess donations will be used to continue to build up the Mary Bee Jensen Fund.

We need *your* help! If every tour alumnus gave just \$25.00, just think what we could accomplish. It's a very tangible way to give back to the program that gave so much to us. A student not able to parthave the experience, *may* be helped.

Please send a contribution today, payable to *BYU Folk Dance Ensemble*, to: 261 RB, BYU, Provo, UT 84604. Indicate "alumni donation" on your check. It's tax deductible. And remember, if BYU fundraising calls you (and they will!), you can also earmark those donations to go to the Folk Dance Ensemble. When you get the form in the mail, simply designate the *Mary Bee Jensen Endowment*, Acct. # 30-187-272.

Bryce Basset
Folk Dance Alumni, President

Spring Performing Arts Company

Scheduling for the Spring Performing Arts Company is now underway. They will once again be doing shows for elementary and junior high schools during the month of May. This has proven to be a very entertaining program and a wonderful training ground for our talented students. There is no better multicultural program to bring to your elementary school. If you or your children's school is interested in booking this highly popular program, contact Delynne Peay at 1-801-378-4283 ASAP.

Emmy Award Winner

We would like to express congratulations to Karl Wesson, folk dancer 1970-73, on his recent recognition at the 1995 Emmy Awards. Karl works with the television show "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman" as a hairstylist and script consultant. He recently received an Emmy for hair design on an episode from the 1994-95 season.

Newsflash: *KP is getting married November 25th!*

1995 Christmas Around The World Concert

Reflections of The Season

It hardly seems possible that Christmas Around the World is celebrating a 36-year-old tradition at Brigham Young University. We invite you to once again be a part of the Folk Dancers as you attend our concert, *Reflections of the Season*.

This season, the concert, scheduled for December 1 and 2 at 7:30 p.m. in the Marriott Center, promises to be a dazzling evening of entertainment as we premiere new repertoire from China, Argentina, Poland, Russia, Hungary and Slovakia to enhance our other concert favorites. (We think you will really enjoy our new choreographies from Russia including a *Russian Quadrille*, and an exquisite new piece from China, *Chu Diao*.) Tickets may be purchased beginning Saturday, November 4th from the Marriott Center Ticket Office or by calling 378-BYU1 or 1-800-322-BYU1.

In addition to the finest in music, international dance and cultural expression, we are bringing *Dancing Waters* out of New York to delight you with the musical movement of multi-colored fountains.

This year our hosts will be Russ Wood and Yayoi Matsuoka Swapp, both folk dance alumni.

Following the concert, you are invited to the upper concourse where we will host you at a special alumni reception and will be able to mingle with many of your folk dance friends. We would love to see many of you who missed last year's *Big Event*.

Organize a CAW Reunion Party!

The Christmas Around the World Concert is the perfect time to organize a reunion party for your specific years here at Brigham Young University. Come to our reception first, and then join *your group* in a get-together afterward. You can use

the Alumni Directory to send out notices. It is great fun contacting your old friends and we will help you with any updates we may have. Just call Vickie Austin at 801-378-3384 (wk).

Folk Dance Directory UPDATE

We are in the process of updating the folk dance alumni directory. If you have any changes in your own information, would like to include a phone number that was previous left out, or have

found one of our *lost folk dance souls*, please send your information ASAP to Vickie Austin, 259 RB - BYU, Provo, Utah 84602. We will announce the date the new directory will be available in the next newsletter.

New Faculty Member

Jeanette Karnil Geslison is our newest parttime faculty member in the Dance Department. She danced with the ensemble 1987-91 and 1993-94, then finished her graduate work in 1995 in Dance Pedagogy. Jeanette is from Odense, Denmark, is married to Mark Geslison (who directs our music ensemble). They have one daughter with one on the way. Jeanette is an extremely talented dancer and teacher. She coordinates curriculum for the beginning and intermediate teams (the international program), teaches, and is director of the Folk Dance for Youth program.

BYU Students Continue to Explore Cultures at Home and Abroad

(An article written by Vickie Austin for *INTERNATIONAL*, a newsletter published by the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies. Two former folk dancers, Shawnda Bishop and Bonnie Romney, coordinated the activities of the Russian group mentioned below while they were in Utah.)

Brigham Young University students who are members of the International Folk Dance Ensemble are continuing to have multicultural experiences right here on our campus and abroad as they live, dance and learn together with people from all over the world. You could call it "education at its finest".

This past summer the dancers had the prestigious experience of representing the United States in an international folk dance world event, Festival Mondial de Folklore Drummondville in Quebec, Canada. Here in close quarters with the freedom to associate with one another and in an atmosphere free of political restraints and prejudices, people came together from all over the world to unite in a setting of friendship and camaraderie. While there, The BYU dancers worked together with the group, *Bartina Neptanc Egyuttas*, from Martirok, Hungary. The students were chosen to perform a Szatmar choreography (because of their international dance background). With the dancers from Hungary and dancers from Canada, the BYU group learned, rehearsed and

polished the choreography. This grand finale was performed at the end of a special Hungarian Night, a performance witnessed by 8,000 to 10,000 people. For performers of international dance, dancing Hungarian dances, with Hungarians, was an opportunity of a lifetime.

Other incredible friendships were forged through similar experiences with groups from Africa, Argentina, Macedonia, Slovakia, Russia, Israel, Republic of China, Kalmoukie, and Mexico. And all of this occurred in one location during a period of twelve days.

On our very own campus, opportunities also arise to enhance cultural understanding. As the semester began, the BYU Dance Department and more specifically the Folk Dance Division hosted *Kalijna*, a Cossack dance ensemble from Krasnodar, in the south of Russia. Students were first able to mingle with the Russian troupe during a dinner hosted by the International Folk Dance Club. During the performance, the audience was thrilled with the incredible energy and skill of the dancers and fascinated with the

beautiful balalaika music. Many in the audience were dance students who had first hand knowledge of Russian dance. This experience increased and reinforced previous experiences with the art form.

A few days later, eight of these same Russian dancers and their choreographer, Valeri Syvashenko, returned to campus to work with the folk dance ensemble. During the next seven hours (with a break for American hamburgers and fries) a certain magic occurred as young American men and women transformed into Russian dancers as they worked with their new friends and mentors. A Russian shawl dance and a quadrille were added to the repertoire of the International Folk Dance Ensemble. The dancers were personally able to feel the fire and spirit of the Russian dance forms from the source itself. But more than that, a definitive sense of mutual admiration grew between the dancers during these few hours. Once again, lifetime friendships were established. A never to be forgotten moment in time was experienced by all.

Currently, the folk dance ensemble is working hard toward their Christmas Around the World concert, a multicultural event in itself, and once again they are engaging the knowledge of an international student on campus in preparing a new special work.

Jiamin Huang, a BYU graduate student in dance from China, comes to our campus with high credentials. She is recognized as being the youngest dance professor in China. She danced professionally for nine years in the Guizhou Dance Company and has taught and lectured since 1982. Jiamin also has created and utilized a method of notation for Chinese classical dance movements.

As a result of Jiamin's expertise, BYU students are once again having an extraordinary experience as they work under her tutelage. The classroom might as well be set in the heart of China when Jiamin shares her treasure of knowledge with the young dancers in setting their new piece.

Opportunities will continue to abound for

students in the international folk dance program at BYU who are commonly engaged in the educational pursuit of learning about people and their cultures. They have discovered that there is no better way to do this than to learn from the people themselves.

Summer Tour Highlights

On the Folk Dance Ensembles recent tour to Eastern Canada and North Central United States it was great to see some of our former dancers. Jack and Cheryl Hansen Fillmore saved the day in Milwaukee when the show was abruptly cancelled. Carrie Backer Blakley was also there with her family. Michelle Wilkinson Howell was in Chicago. Wayne and Cheri Weight Wride, Derek and Cristina Bingham Wride, (and all the Wrides almost) were in the Kirtland-Cleveland area.

The group also had a tremendous experience just outside Pittsburgh as an exchange was held with their Eastern counterparts, The Duquesne University Tamburitians. The BYU dancers met the Tammies at their annual training retreat where they spent the morning socializing and performing for each other. The Tammies are a group that specializes in Balkan and Eastern European music and dance. They perform to live music and everyone plays the tamburitza to some degree. (This is on Ed's wish list) They are celebrating their 50th anniversary this year. Many of you remember them from 1975 when they came out to perform in BYU's Festival. It was a real treat for both groups to get together and become acquainted once again. It turned out to be one of the highlights of the trip.

If any of you are interested in registering your children for *FOLK DANCE FOR YOUTH*, you should call DaNae Andersen, Conferences and Workshops at 378-4854 for the Winter Session.

To Update Your Personal Information

clip this portion and send to Vickie Austin,
259 RB-BYU, Provo, Utah 84602

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

SS#: (for office use only)
