

THE FOLK DANCER

Alumni Newsletter Spring 2007 Edition Editor: Emilee Wright

Greetings from the Editor

Hello again from the World Dance Division at Brigham Young University! It's been a crazy semester with many new and exciting things going on. We had a wonderful time at Christmas Around the World this past December. It was great to see some of you there!

In this issue, look for:

- News from our division
- Tour Reports from our Performing Arts Company
- Upcoming tour cities and dates
 - Club News
 - Faculty Spotlight
- National Folk Organization Conference Review

So, sit back and get ready for a thorough update on the BYU World Dance Program!

News from our Division

Colleen West

As always, faculty and students were busy with performances and events, not to mention just trying to keep up with all that the semester demands!

We had some changes in our faculty this semester. Tara Eyre, a part-time faculty member in our division, decided to be a full-time mom to her two very active little boys. She will be missed by her BYU students and colleagues, but I am sure she will never regret her decision.

PAC had a wonderful opportunity to perform "Hopak" for the Ambassador of Ukraine, who was a guest of Brigham Young University. Two weeks later, PAC performed their new Slovakian suite to the ambassador of Slovakia, who was also visiting BYU. It was a very rewarding experience.

We are also pleased to announce that Mary Bee Jensen, received an award from the Utah Dance Education Organization in March 2007. We as the World Dance Department are so very proud of her and so grateful for all of her hard work that has made our program possible!

In Fall semester of 2007, Greg and Maria Tucker will be coordinating the clogging program in the world dance division. We look forward to having them as members of our World Dance Division faculty! We also wish to extend a heartfelt thanks to Vickie Austin for her years of hard work and dedication.

Our dedicated faculty continue to improve their skills and build their knowledge. Colleen West and Susanne Davis were able to attend the National Aapherd Convention in Baltimore this semester. This summer, Susanne will also be travelling throughout Europe and then Greece to present research. Jeanette will also be attending a Hungarian Conference this summer.

**DONT FORGET
SUMMER WORKSHOPS 2007 !!!**

**Children's Folk Workshop
June 18-20, 2007**

**Cougar Clogging Classic
June 21-23, 2007**

**Rhythm Tap
June 28-30, 2007**

For more information contact
BYU Sports Camps at
(801)422-6757 or online at
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Performing Arts Company

Tour Reviews

Mid-Semester Tour 2007 -- Ed Austin

The Performing Arts Company recently completed a very successful tour to Southern California where they performed for more than 10,000 audience members and involved themselves in outreach programs for close to 4,000. The tour took place from February 23 to March 4. We have begun traveling earlier in the year to stay away from conflicts with Spring Breaks, and to avoid (as much as possible) mid-semester exams and assignments.

Performances were held in St. George, Utah and Bakersfield, California as we traveled westward. Concerts then followed in Thousand Oaks, El Centro, and Long Beach. As we returned to Utah, we had one final performance in Henderson, Nevada which created a nice midway stopping place before completing the trip home.

The students performed brilliantly and, once again, had opportunities to stay in the homes of wonderful people who received them with great generosity and kindness.

A special element of this tour which made it different from tours of the past was found in the Long Beach area as we performed for three days in the Long Beach Performing Arts Center. Joel Ward, of the BYU Alumni Association, Southern California chapter, was in charge of our performances there and did an amazing job with all of the arrangements and promotion.

It was especially memorable for several reasons. During the three days we performed five concerts: 2 matinees and 3 evening performances. The matinees were shorter performances designed for young students who were bussed into the Performing Arts Center. Joel had received special grant monies that were used to finance the travel for schools that normally could not afford this kind of activity. The Performing Arts Center holds 3,051 people and our audiences were large and very enthusiastic. In fact, for one of the matinees and for our final evening performance, the venue was completely full.

The dancers were very excited about their stay here because they did not have to set up and strike for every performance. Instead of traveling each day on the bus, they were able to enjoy Long Beach and the surrounding area. During one day Joel invited the group to his house for an afternoon of swimming and relaxation.

All in all, this was a very enjoyable and successful Southern California tour. The students continue to share their light both on, and off the stage.

This Summer We're Going To...

Rome, Italy-- July 18, 2007
Bari, Italy-- July 20, 2007
Florence, Italy-- July 23, 2007
Castiglione del Lago Festival, Italy-- July 25-29, 2007
Cori Festival, Italy-- July 30, 2007
Marseille, France-- Aug 6, 2007
Confolens Festival, France-- Aug 7-15, 2007
Paris, France -- Aug 16, 2007

Summer Tour 2006 --Benjamin Watson

This review of the Performing Arts Company's summer tour was submitted by a student and current Performing Arts Company member, Benjamin Watson. We thought it would be interesting for you to experience tour from a student's perspective. We hope you like it!

The 2006 Folk Dance Summer tour to the Baltic States and Canada provided for some of the choicest memories any BYU performer could hope to capture. Following are a few of these memories from the perspective of one of the dancers—



Nida, Lithuania: It is difficult to find another performing group from BYU that has had the opportunity to perform at midnight on an outdoor stage for an audience of hundreds of standing spectators who—when the show is finished—all yell in unison (and in English) “One more time! One more time! One more time!” --only giving up the chant when the performers leave the stage to greet the audience. Such was the case with the BYU International Folk Dance Ensemble at their stop in the small coastal village of Nida, Lithuania. The reception received from these wonderful people after the show would have made the unknowing bystander think that the Beatles had just performed! Indeed, this memory from the Summer 2006 tour will never be forgotten.

Druskininkai, Lithuania: This performance in this quaint, touristy town was one of those “adapt as you go” shows, beginning with the fact that the outdoor stage we performed on was rubber. That’s right . . . rubber. It certainly made for exciting muted versions of our Irish-hardshoe and clogging numbers. However, the memories from this performance don’t end with the Michelin-tire stage. After the performance we had the opportunity to spend the rest of the evening eating and chatting with a local, Lithuanian folk music and dance ensemble. Although tired from the long, hot day and still not completely over jet lag, the BYU folk dancers held strong, talking late into the evening with these new-found friends.

Tallinn, Estonia: Tallinn was one of those eclectic experiences with activities ranging from a performance at the ambassador’s residence (where some of the dancers had their first try at “caviar”), a day full of touristy sight-seeing, Adam Grimshaw making friends with a Russian street-sitter who played spoons while Adam played his banjo, Ben Watson chasing down a boy selling a bouquet of flowers so he could purchase them for a girl, and the ensemble having the opportunity to perform in the city-square on cobble-stones—indeed, Tallinn was an adventure every step of the way.

Quebec: The Drummondville Festival will best be remembered by the friendships with people from nations everywhere. Members from the BYU Ensemble became close with dancers from every group represented at the festival. The Slovaks took time to teach us a few moves from their dances, the Colombians were always good for a chat after shows, and the Turks became our biggest fans (and we theirs).



Our Folk Dance Club

Jeanette Geslison

This year, the Folk Dance club is directed by Thomas Rawcliffe as President. His efforts were very commendable.

Our most recent club happening was the annual Spring Festival of Nations. Our Mountain Strings band, Performing Arts Company, Spring Performing Arts Company, and four team classes presented dances from around the world including Israel, Russia, Lithuania, Romania, America and of course Ukraine. Also, our 2006-07 scholarship recipients and graduating world dance minors were also recognized.

We finished the year celebrating the family that we have become with a Folk Dance Home Evening on April 17th. We had a year end slide show and announced our new club president for the coming school year.

We have thoroughly enjoyed our club council and members this year and can't wait for another year of fun and memorable experiences to start in September!

NFO Conference 2007

In March, many of our students, as well as our faculty, were able to attend the National Folk Organization conference which was held in Salt Lake City, and our Brigham Young University campus this year. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn and grow.

This year's guest instructor Yves Moreau. Yves lives in Montreal, Quebec, Canada and is recognized as one of North America's foremost exponents of Bulgarian dance and folklore. He taught mostly non-choreographed village dances which he collected during his studies throughout the world.

Along with learning dances, many attended workshops. This year there was much focus on archiving. Ron Houston taught an excellent workshop on "Archiving in America," which was followed by an "Archiving at Brigham Young University" workshop taught by David Day.

Faculty Spotlight: Catching up with Delynne Peay

So, it's 9:30 p.m. on a Friday night and I'm writing this article about what's going on in my life. You mean you can't guess?--I'm still putting in crazy hours for the cause of Folk Dance. Life is grand!

So far this semester, SPAC has had the opportunity to sing, yes sing for Ira and Marilou Fulton who have graciously donated to the College of Health and Human Performance; we have performed for the "BYU Significant Donors Banquet"; the UDEO Conference held at UVSC this year where they honored Mary Bee for her pioneering spirit and contribution to dance in Utah; and we also donated our time and talents for the Russian Club Benefit Concert to help the children in Russian orphanages. We've been very, very busy!

A couple of new dances in our SPAC show for 2007 include a Sevillana from Spain, a new Charleston number, El Rascapetate from Mexico, a Brazilian Maculele (done only once before), and of course a brand new clog to music from High School Musical.

On the homefront, just enjoying being a grammie to three of the cutest kids in the world, and trying to keep Garth out of trouble!!