
BYU FOLK DANCE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

60th Anniversary

The International Folk Dance Ensemble (IFDE) celebrated its 60th anniversary during a three-week tour in May throughout Southeast Asia. This was the first time in 20 years that the ensemble visited Thailand and Vietnam, and its first time in Cambodia. During the trip, the IFDE presented five devotionals, seven assemblies and workshops and seven performances to over 8,000 people, while traveling throughout the cities of Bangkok, Pattya, Phnom Penh, Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, and Siem Reap.



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BYU ALUMNI

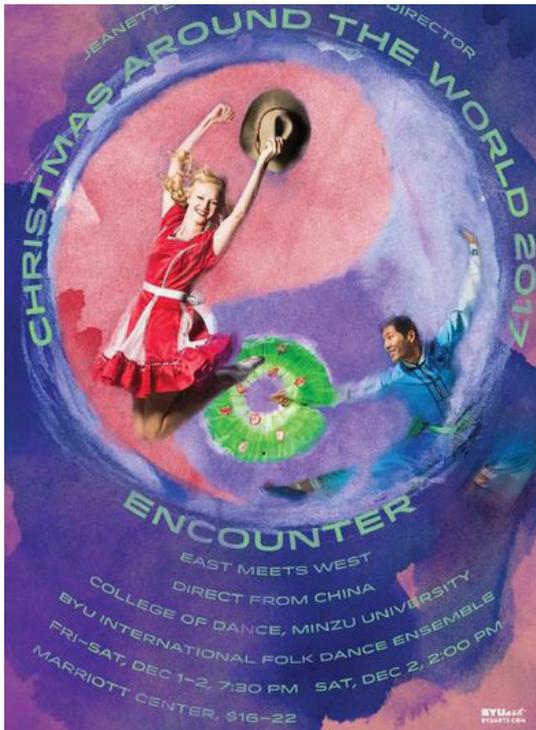
Jeanette Geslison and Jiamin Huang in China

Jeanette Geslison, Artistic Director of the BYU International Folk Dance Ensemble and Jiamin Huang, BYU Dance Department--Contemporary Area, spent one week together in Beijing at Minzu University working with the students to set choreography for Encounter, which will be debuted at CAW. The students at Minzu University study classical Chinese dance along with the minority styles of Chinese

dance. There are almost 400 dance majors. Twenty dancers and five musicians will be joining BYU students this year to perform Encounter. It is a collaborative choreographic work to highlight East meeting West and to share and celebrate our two cultures. Jeanette is very excited to welcome these students to participate in the concert this year. The Minzu students will also perform three of their own pieces.



*Christmas Around the World, **Encounter***



This year's Christmas Around The World, Encounter, will take place December 1-2, 2017. Evening performances begin at 7:30 PM and Saturday's matinee will begin at 2:00 p.m. Come and celebrate the beginning of the Christmas season with this spectacular annual display of world dance and music. Tickets are on sale now! The Marriott Center ticket office can be reached at 422--BYU1 or 1-800-322-BYU1 or you can purchase tickets online at <http://arts.byu.edu/event/christmas-around-the-world/2017-12-01/>

The pre-concert Christmas market will begin one hour prior to concert in the concourse. Come, meet and interact with dancers in costume, live music, crafts, activities, jugglers, folk dance t-shirts for sale and food vendors.

We hope you will join us for Christmas Around the World, Encounter, and don't forget to join us for the Alumni Reception to be held just following the 2:00 p.m. Saturday matinee performance in the assembly hall of the Hinckley Alumni Building.

Other Upcoming IFDE Performances

SATURDAY, MARCH 3

Browning Center | 7:30 - 9 PM
3950 W. Campus Drive, Ogden, UT

THURSDAY, MARCH 29

Covey Center for the Arts
425 Center Street, Provo, UT

SATURDAY, MARCH 17

BYU Winterfest - International
Folk Dance Ensemble
2 and 7 p.m

Conference Center Theater,
60 N Temple, Salt Lake City, UT
Tickets at <https://www.lds.org/church/events/temple-square-events/2018-winterfest>

JUNE 27 - JULY 18

BYU Folk Dancers 2018 Summer
Tour in the summer of 2018 to
Belgium, France, Poland.

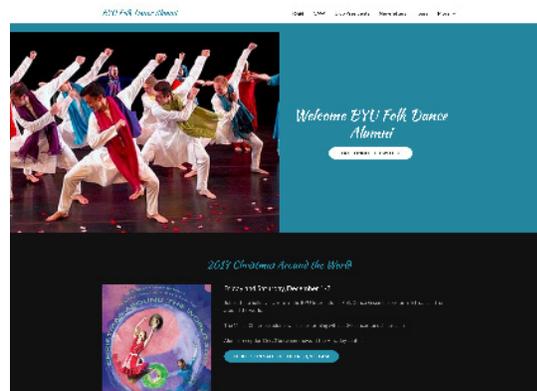
BYU Folk Dance Alumni Site has gotten a facelift!

The Folk Dance alumni website was created in 2006 for the 50th Anniversary of the Folk Dance program at BYU. The website was the means to communicate the events and schedules for the reunion at that time. Since then it has grown to display newsletters, tour histories, posters, calendar events, and much more as the web site is now 11 years old (2006-2017).

Sections you can easily visit are Christmas Around the World, Club Presidents, Newsletters, Tours (histories, group photos), In Memoriam, and Resources from the top navigation on each page. At the bottom of every page are links to the Folk Dancers social media places such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube. Videos can be easily added for greater awareness of folk

dance activities. We've even added an easy Contact Us page to send updates to if your email changes or add alumni not currently getting emails from the alumni association.

Now is YOUR chance to give suggestions of what you would like to see added to your website. We continue to get great feedback of the legacy we are able to preserve of the Folk Dance history as we continue to share it with alumni and others. Thanks as always for your continued support.



Ed and Vickie Austin to Retire After This School Year

For many of us folkdancers, our experience was profoundly influenced by Ed and Vickie Austin, our teachers, our mentors and our friends. We are sad to see them retiring this year, but are so grateful to have been able to rub shoulders with them. They have truly inspired us over the years to be better dancers, better people and, most importantly, more committed disciples of Christ. Ed and Vickie, we love you very much! Each of us who has been part of the BYU folkdancers will look back on our time spent with you and others in the program as some of our life's most cherished memories!

Here is an e-interview with Ed about his experience here at BYU, followed by some thoughts Vickie shared in a face-to-face interview:



Ed Austin

1. How long did you dance as a member of the Folk Dance Ensemble? I danced on IFDE from Winter 1976 - Fall 1978

2. How do you become interested in trying out? What was your background in dance? I was introduced to International Folk Dancing in high school in Laguna Beach. A former BYU folk dancer was our drama teacher and after teaching us a Maori Haka for a school assembly, he took some of us to dance with the Laguna recreational folk dance group that met every Wed. evening in the old women's gym at the high school -- about a 7 min. walk from my home. I was hooked. I came as a freshman to BYU, took the beginning folk dance class from Nina Woodbury (Boothe). That was my only connection to folk dancing at BYU that year. While on my mission, my good friend from high school auditioned for Folk Dance and was put on a team. She told me that I would love it and took me to a beginning team when I returned to BYU after my mission. She introduced me to Don Allen who invited me to dance on the team he was directing. After one semester, I was invited to dance on the 12 couple team of the Performing Arts Company.

3. What tours did you participate in as a student and is there a favorite place you visited? As a student, I participated on the 1976 and 1977 summer tours. I think that Israel has been one of the most important places I have ever visited -- for so many reasons. My time there continues to influence the way I approach life, my ideas about other cultures, and how I share folk dance with others.

4. What has been the highlight for you as the Director of the ensemble? Trying to identify the biggest highlight for me as the director of the IFDE is really difficult because there have been so many. But I will pick two that definitely stand out.

Participating in the Utah Winter Olympic Games -- Opening Ceremony and Light of the World. Probably because it was THE WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES! Everything that means in terms of having the eyes of the world upon us, being able to represent the United States and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints -- when I think

Ed and Vickie Austin to Retire After This School Year (cont.)

of all of this combined -- I don't know what to say -- I am speechless (and I am never speechless!)

In addition, I would have to call the audition for Kenny Ortega an experience I will never forget. He and his colleagues came to BYU to see our dancers, and ended up inviting the entire company to dance in the Opening Ceremony. He watched us in room 278 of the Richards Building. The room was filled with the anticipation and excitement of the dancers ... and their performance was electrifying. I had never felt this amount of energy during a dance demonstration ... and I haven't since.

Collaborating and performing with the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble in Budapest, Hungary -- in a professional sense, this was a dream come true for me. I have always been so proud of the hard work of my dancers who, over the many years of dedication of so many, arrived at a level of skill and professionalism that a company such as the Hungarian State folk Ensemble would even consider collaborating with our BYU ensemble. My heart was so full of appreciation for so much and for so many, I have a very hard time expressing it. I was filled to the brim. I could not believe that we were being given this opportunity. In addition, to be able to call Mihalyi Gabor, their artistic director, my friend, is an honor. I will never forget him, his talented company of musicians and dancers, and the wonderful time we all shared together.

5. What will you miss the most about your time here at BYU? There are two things I will miss the most.

a. The relationships I have formed with people are the things I believe I will miss the most. Now, in one way I already am dealing with this as so many colleagues have retired ahead of me ... and my students graduate and leave every year. But there have always been wonderful new faculty and new students to form friendships with. So now I will just need to spend more time figuring out the best ways to connect with all of these wonderful people I have grown to respect and love. I am not good with facebook, but I really am hoping to spend more time reaching out and re-connecting with our alumni. The folk dance program has always been more than just a program ... it is a family. So if there are some alumni out there who would be interested in helping Vickie and I to do this, we would welcome your knowledge and expertise.

b. The craft itself. Of course, I love to dance. I suspect that I may end up creating opportunities for dancing for our alumni (and myself) once I retire. But that can be a huge commitment unless I can find others who are also passionate to the extent that they would be willing to help.

And when I speak of the craft, I will really miss the creative process involved with staging cultural dance on the stage and creating a concert. I actually thought it might be easier to walk away from this than it is turning out to be. Recently, I walked into 278 RB to view some guest instruction. But the minute the music came on, I had to dance, and during the entire experience I was yearning to work once again with our marvelous guest instructors to create a rich cultural experience for an audience. Later in the day, I went into an IFDE rehearsal and became caught up with the excellent teaching and directing of Jeanette Geslison -- and the way in which the group was learning and embracing some new choreography. The deep feelings of love and respect for this program and its students caught me off guard. I love the creative process. The good news -- our program is thriving and I will be leaving it in talented and capable hands. What a blessing!



6. What are you most looking forward to in retirement? I have been working at BYU since Fall of 1984 -- as the artistic director of IFDE since Winter of 1985 - Summer of 2011 -- 27 years. Since then, I have had many new growing opportunities to teach, advise, and work with all of the dance majors. It has all be an incredible gift for me. But, anyone who has worked in any field founded upon creativity -- it never ends and you never put it too bed -- you take the work with you wherever you go. I am so thankful for a family that was able to support me for all those years in this role. But now, retirement offers me the chance to have more choice in my daily schedule. I am really looking forward to follow-through with some exciting plans that will be centered around Vickie, and our family.

7. How has folk dance shaped who you have become? It is really difficult to explain the many ways in which my time in the Folk Dance program at BYU has shaped my life. I believe that what you do, and the people you do it with greatly influence who you are. Each of us that have been part of this folk dance family are part of a rich and unique culture of people, traditions, and values that have formed our personal identities. Even though we all have other unique sub-cultures that we participate in, all of us will always share in the common BYU folk dance experiences that have helped shape our lives. It bonds us together. If you haven't heard me say it before, I'll say it once again -- BYU folk dance is true!

8. A personal comment: I strongly believe that none of the blessings we have received from being members of the BYU International Folk Dance Program could have ever come about at any other institution of higher learning. I recently discovered this verse in John 10:10 "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." The richness and abundance of life that I have experienced through my association with this program is a gift from God, our Savior, even Jesus Christ. I hope that we never forget where our gifts come from and to Whom we should be giving credit to for all that we have been afforded.

AND ... we hope that we will get to visit with many of you in the near future. Don't be surprised when Vickie and I end up at your door for a visit! :)

Ed will retire following Winter semester 2018.



Vickie Austin

Although Vickie didn't have extensive training in dance, having only take Modern Dance at Orem High School, she was a natural. She became interested in the folkdancers after a friend from her ward had just gotten home from tour and talked up the program. On her friend's recommendation, Vickie tried out, and the rest is history. As a student under Mary Bee Jensen and Don Allen, Vickie went on five international tours, visiting Israel, France, Germany, Switzerland and Canada, as well as multiple mid-semester tours to the Eastern United States, Wisconsin and Oklahoma.

After earning her M.S. in Health Education and dancing with the folk-dancers for seven years here at BYU, Vickie became an adjunct instructor in the University's Department of Dance in 1985. Over the years she has been a mainstay in the World Dance Area and has taught Rhythm and Dance, Multiple Levels of Clogging, Beginning Folk Dance, Intermediate Folk Dance and Western: Square and Traditional American Dance.

When asked what the highlight of her time as a faculty member at BYU has been, Vickie said, "The highlight has been seeing students grow in appreciation for dance in general and for other cultures, particularly the 170 students, because it might be their first experience with dance."

As retirement approaches (she will finish her work at BYU at the end of Fall 2017 semester), Vickie says the thing she is most looking forward to is being able to go wherever they want, whenever they want whether for family events or future missionary opportunities. What she will miss the most is the warm association she has enjoyed with her colleagues and students.

She also said that folk dance has shaped her because of the relationships she has developed with people near and far. "Folk dance has broadened my understanding of the world. I have experienced other cultures and have met so many great people throughout the world. It has given me a lot of opportunities to grow and learn about life. I will always remember and cherish the times with the students, too--the experiences we have had and the things we have learned."