



Spring 2020

The Folk Dancer Newsletter



Christmas Around the World Alumni Reception December 2019

by **Tamara Chamberlain, Alumni Chair**

Christmas Around the World was, yet again, another hit with students, alumni, and patrons. We were so proud of the IFDE and the entire folk dance club. The dancers and the band entertained and enlightened the audience from start to finish! The folk dance alumni chapter had a reception after the Saturday matinee performance in the Hinckley Building and it was wonderful to GATHER with old and new friends. The reception was unique this

year in that the alumni chapter was able to award two Replenishment Grants in the amount of $\frac{1}{4}$ tuition each. This money was donated by the current STUDENTS in a “Give Now” drive that was held in November 2019. The entire folk dance club was invited to participate by giving whatever amount they felt they could give. We had **3 classes who had 100% of the students donate and in total, there were 116 students who donated to raise a total of \$735!** $\frac{1}{4}$ tuition is \$724 so they raised enough money for one $\frac{1}{4}$ tuition grant. BYU Alumni matched our donations, so we had enough to **give away 2 grants**. If students can do this, then so can the rest of our alumni! We all have benefitted from this folk dance program and paying it forward really can help. Donating to a replenishment grant also helps us become a “True Blue” chapter and the BYU Alumni Association will award us more funds if we reach that status. [Click here to donate](#). ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL!!

Because I have been given much, I too must give... These students are so grateful!

First Ever Folk Dance Alumni Replenishment Grant Awardees



Here are the two 2019 Replenishment Grant Recipients: Danielle Krzymowski and Gabi Russell.

Guest Choreographer Comes to BYU



by [Jeanette Geslison](#), IFDE Artistic Director

International Folk Dance Ensemble guest choreographer Su Yafei came to BYU last October to set a new Tibetan dance choreography that premiered at *Christmas Around the World* 2019. Su Yafei is a dance professor at Minzu University in Beijing, China and recently won a national prize for best traditional dance choreography. We first began working with her last May in Beijing during our tour in China. Yafei taught a segment of the movement style and choreography which gave the students a chance to become familiar with this very new vocabulary. Then in October Yafei spent one week with us here in Provo setting the new piece entitled “Children on Snow Mountain” on this year’s ensemble. The piece seeks to fuse contemporary and traditional styles of Tibetan dance. Since Yafei did not speak any English we worked through a translator, one of the dancers McKenna Wright. It was literally an immersive week in hands-on and visual learning and a welcoming cross-cultural experience for the students. Yafei was inspiring and absolutely delightful to work with and I hope it is not the last time we work together.

National Folk Organization Conference

by Amy Jex, Traditionz Director



In early March the National Folk Organization held its annual conference in Laguna Hills, California in conjunction with the Laguna Woods Folk Festival's 50 anniversary. BYU was fortunate to have five faculty attend as well as 14 students from our world dance program, thanks to a generous grant from the Dance Department! Several other BYU Folk Dance alumni from across the U.S. were also present.

The conference highlighted presentations and workshops from many American pioneering researchers who began their work in the Balkans in the 1960's including Elsie Dunin, Martin Koenig, Yves Moreau and Janet Reineck. Students from Jeanette Geslison's "Dance: A Reflection of Culture" class were excited to meet and listen to Dr. Dunin, whose work in dance ethnology they had studied in class. Colin Anderson, a member of IFDE commented, "I enjoyed the chance to learn about the various research projects that actually document folk dance. We always perform "authentic" dances and I hadn't really considered the work that went into recording and preserving those cultural styles."

Other exciting workshops included a giant lace-making demonstration that became a contra dance of sorts, dancing to live music with the Laguna Woods dancers and learning new dances from guest instructors such as Aaron Alpert (Israeli) and Yves Moreau (Bulgarian), at the conference and the festival.

Student Levi Hancock expressed, “The conference and festival that we attended opened my eyes to a whole different community that I never knew existed. The people that participated in this conference and festival were so passionate about appreciating culture and expressing themselves through dance. I absolutely loved learning so many dances from around the world, but even more enjoyable to me was talking to the people. Each person had a unique story about how they came to love folk dance and had all sorts of personal experiences to share about when they have traveled around the world and experienced the cultures that we were doing dances from. I wish more college-aged students like myself could get this same experience to see and experience this community of amazing people in the future.”

For more information about the National Folk Organization, visit <http://nfo-usa.org/> . Next year’s conference is slated for Spring 2021 in Massachusetts.

Enjoy this fun video from 2019 when BYU hosted the Conference in Provo:

<http://nfo-usa.org/annual-conference/>

We would encourage many of you to join NFO! Click <http://nfo-usa.org/membership/> to join and be a part of this amazing organization!

Ed and Vickie Austin in Serbia

by **Ed and Vickie Austin** on April 23

These past couple of weeks have been interesting as we look back in review. We have been quietly and safely tucked away in our apartment – staying connected with our family, friends, Serbian members of the Church and other missionaries in our mission and throughout Europe and the United States through the miracle of our technical devices. We learn new things every day. And I really wish we had bought up some stock in ZOOM Conferencing. They must be doing very well as everyone uses their platform to communicate.



Serbia COVID-19 Update

The COVID-19 conditions in Serbia have been strict, especially for pensioners (**65+** that’s us!). However, we feel safe. We owe so much to our two young missionaries in Sremska Mitrovica who visit us often and do all of our shopping. Here is an example of the strict laws we follow. We don’t think this would work in the United States. But the people here are very obedient.

The entire country has been following a curfew of 5pm where no one can be out of their homes. As of Tuesday, the curfew has been relaxed to 6pm. We Pensioners (65+) have a 24-hour curfew except for once a week from 4am to 7am. That has now been relaxed to allow us to go outside for 30 minutes, 3 times a week if we stay within 600 meters of our residence. It will feel so good to walk outside.

We just finished our second weekend lockdown. It went from Friday at 5pm to Tuesday at 5am. The entire country followed this. We will do one more this weekend, (that only lasts until Monday at 5am) and hopefully, we will be done with those. Everyone hopes that May 1st will bring the country one more step closer to normal hours – especially for us “old “pensioners!

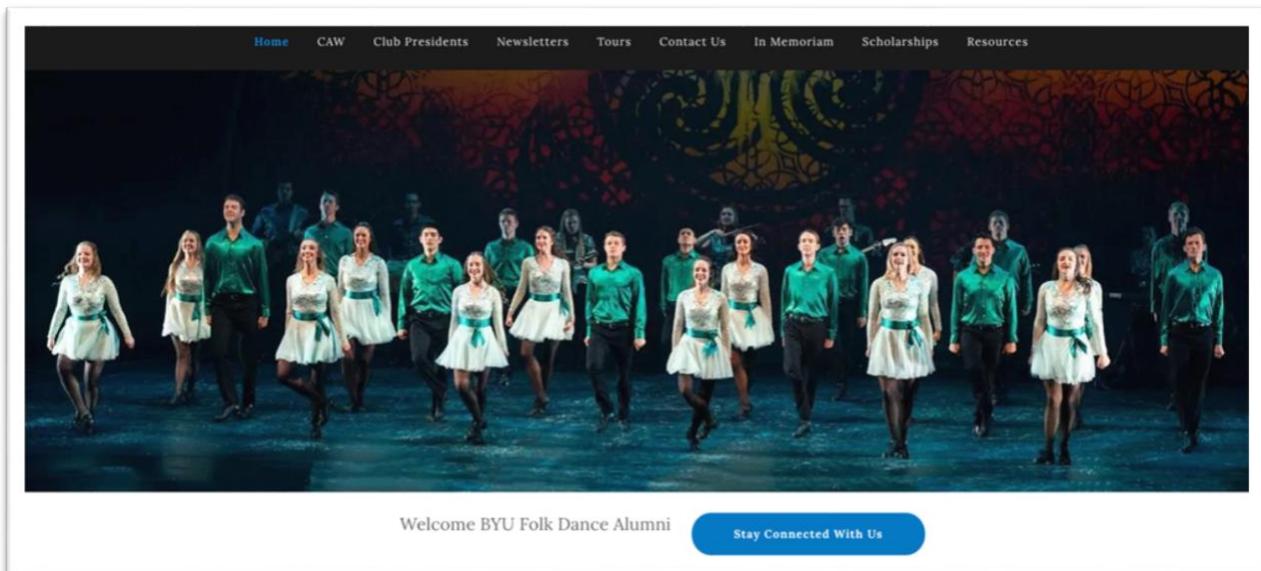
Each day we feel certain that Serbia is the place we need to be. This experience is teaching us many things and causing us to learn much about ourselves and our relationship with our Savior, Jesus Christ. We hope that our efforts to support the members and the missionaries has been meaningful and acceptable. In return, they are blessing our lives every day. The very best in people is being revealed as they perform helpful acts of kindness. It seems that healing of all varieties is taking place in a pandemic world full of sickness.



Covid-19 Cancels All BYU Dance Technique Classes Spring/Summer

The Traditionz group and International Folk Dance Ensemble both will not be touring this summer due to the Covid-19 pandemic. They are hopeful technique classes will resume this fall and look forward to a strong 2020-2021 school year. The festival in Russia that the IFDE team was planning on attending is rescheduled for next summer. We wish all of these students the best, especially those that recently graduated. Congratulations!

BYU Folk Dance Alumni Website is 14 years old!



Can you believe it? So many great things we've been able to provide for your ease access. You should revisit it again if it's been awhile for you. (<https://byufolkdancealumni.com/>) **Stay connected with us! Let us know if your email has changed or if you or other alumni need to get on our alumni email list. [Contact Us](#)**

Some ambitious content we'd like to add would be costumes and dances from featured countries. A great stroll down memory lane.

Some items of interest on the website include: (if you have anything we are missing, please share 🙌)

- [Christmas Around the World posters and programs](#)
- [Club Presidents](#) through the years
- [The Folk Dancer Newsletters](#)
- [Tours & tour group photos, tour histories](#) (missing 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019)
- [In Memoriam](#) (let us know if we are missing any dear friends)
- [Scholarships](#) for the current school year
- Social Media resources ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#), [YouTube](#))

If you would like to help serve on the alumni board, please contact Tamara Chamberlain at tamarachamberlain@byu.edu. We are looking for more eager alumni to help plan our **2021 65th Anniversary Reunion!** It's going to be pretty exciting!!