



BYU INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE ENSEMBLE PRESENTS

CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

20
24

20
24

'TIS THE SEASON
DECEMBER 6-7

BYU MARRIOTT
CENTER

WITH BYU RHYTHM N' SOUL COLLECTIVE • BYU MOUNTAIN STRINGS
• BYU JAZZ VOICES • ROCKY MOUNTAIN EXPRESS CLOGGERS

DECEMBER 6-7 • BYU MARRIOTT CENTER

BYU
ONSTAGE

'TIS THE SEASON

Christmas Around the World rings in the Christmas season with dance and music featuring nearly 200 student performers. Officially opening in 1960, *Christmas Around the World* is the longest-running Christmas production on campus. It was originated by Mary Bee Jensen, founder of the BYU folk dance program. It is estimated that this concert has given opportunity to more than 13,000 students since its inception. *'Tis the Season* will highlight some of the many ways we celebrate Christmas and other seasonal religious holidays around the globe. We will share cultural traditions and Christmas decorations specific to each cultural representation in a spirit of friendship and honor.

We welcome as guest performers this year BYU's Rhythm N' Soul Collective, a student-run group that celebrates, explores, and communicates diverse traditions of African culture. They will perform a new West African choreography by guest cultural dance expert Ishmael Konney, assistant professor of dance at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. We are also excited to welcome back Rocky Mountain Express Cloggers, directed by Greg and Maria Tucker, one of the leading clogging groups in Utah. Every year we are fortunate to welcome BYU's Mountain Strings folk music ensemble, who will provide live music for selected pieces. BYU's Jazz Voices will join Mountain Strings and the dancers in our opener.

This year we are excited to present new choreographies by guest cultural dance experts Mateus Arruda (Brazil), Gary Larsen (Canadian step dancing), Greg and Sally Rawlings (India), Megumi Viola Pietroniro (Spain), and Steven Weintraub (Yiddish).

Our BYU folk dance students continue the legacy of presenting cultural dance traditions from around the world. This educational experience enriches and expands their perception and understanding of the world. It increases their appreciation of people of different cultures as they learn about others' traditions from expert guest teachers. Embodying other cultural dance traditions gives way for deeper understanding and appreciation, and it may also give opportunity to learn more about their own ancestral roots.

We hope you will enjoy the preshow concourse activities and concessions. We are excited to celebrate with you this year and hope that this may be the beginning of a wonderful Christmas season for each of you.



Jeanette Geslison, Artistic Director





PROGRAM

OPENER: 'TIS THE SEASON! Full Cast

Choreography: Jeanette Geslison **Music:** "Deck the Halls" (Traditional) **Musical Arrangement:** Mark Geslison, Hayley Kirkland, and Mountain Strings; performed by BYU Jazz Voices and Mountain Strings

 **POLAND: OBEREK** International Folk Dance Ensemble

Oberek and Kujawiak are two of Poland's five national dances. Oberek is a vibrant and exciting couple dance, which is balanced here with the romantic Kujawiak couple dance.

Choreography: Jeanette Geslison **Music:** "Wesele w Jerioranach" and "Było nie było" (W. Pawelec) and "Wczesne popołudnie" (M. Skorupiński), performed by Mountain Strings

 **UKRAINE: SHCHEDRYK** Tier II Ensemble

Known in the United States as the Christmas carol "Carol of the Bells," "Shchedryk" was written in 1916 by a Ukrainian composer, Mykola Leontovich, to a Ukrainian folk melody. The original Ukrainian lyrics tell of a swallow that flies into a house to deliver a prediction of the bounty and good fortune the family will encounter in the new year. Enchanted by the ringing nature of the tune, American choir director Peter Wilhousky penned English lyrics about chiming bells in the 1930s.

Choreography: Amy Jex **Music:** "Shchedryk," recorded by Kateryna Pylypenko; "Shchedrik," recorded by Kitka; and "Shchedryk," principally arranged and conducted by Oleksander Stadnyk, performed by the Volyn Choir and Orchestra of the Volyn Ukrainian Song & Dance Company

 **BRAZIL: BAILARES GAÚCHOS** International Folk Dance Ensemble

This exciting medley of Brazilian gaucho dances begins with Tirana do Lenço, a courtship dance originally from 18th-century Spain that conveys a lady's gradual acceptance of her suitor's romantic advances. This is followed by a men's Chula, a percussive dance performed with a spear, which arose from competitions among cattle drivers on the road from Rio Grande do Sul to São Paulo. The medley concludes with the cheerful Rancheira de Carreirinha, a 19th-century social dance that grew from the European waltz and mazurka, infused with exciting Brazilian rhythms.

Choreography: Mateus Arruda and Priscila Werner **Music:** "Tirana do Lenço" (traditional), recorded by Leandro Berlesi; "Chula" (traditional), recorded by Ricardo Bergha and Gabriel Maculan; "Rancheira de Carreirinha" (traditional), recorded by Leandro Berlesi

PROGRAM



YIDDISH: CHANUKAH SHIMCHA Tier II Ensemble

Unlike most Jewish holidays, Chanukah is not mandated by the Torah but instead celebrates a historical victory of the Maccabees over a Greek regime. The lighting of the menorah, a candelabra with eight branches, memorializes the reclamation of the Temple and the "miracle of the oil." According to the Talmud, there was only sufficient pure oil to burn the lamps for one night, but the consecration rites required eight. A miracle occurred and the small cruse of oil lasted eight times as long as expected, hence the reason Chanukah is celebrated for eight days.

Our dance presents impressions of traditional Chanukah celebrations beginning with a family lighting the menorah. The whirling nature of the first dance references the dreidel, a 4-sided top that is spun in a game. Legend has it that when the Greeks outlawed the study of Torah, Jews would outsmart them by playing with a spinning top—a popular gambling device—while learning Torah orally.

The second section represents family and friends coming together to celebrate the joyous holiday. The dance displays several Jewish square dances, such as the sher, to represent the joyous gathering with a modern American twist to the klezmer music.

Choreography: Steven Weintraub **Music:** "Boruch Ateh" (traditional), "Drei Dreidele - Spin the Dreidle" by Moishe Oysher, and "Happy Joyous Hanukkah" by Woody Guthrie, performed by Mountain Strings



CZECHIA: SMÍM PROSIT 2:00 Ensemble

Combining two traditional folk dances, this choreography begins with a gentle, romantic waltz and ends with a lively polka. The polka is said to have originated in the Bohemian region of the Czech Republic in the early to mid-19th century and is thought to have evolved from the earlier waltz.

Choreography: Traditional, with staging by Amy Jex and Jacob Madsen **Music:** "V Jičíně Troubili" and "Stodolička"



SLOVAKIA: LÚČNICA International Folk Dance Ensemble

Lúčnica is the name of the Slovak National Folklore Ballet, the BYU ensemble's friends in Bratislava. "Forever young" best describes this set of two dances—verbunk and syrakovy.

Choreography: Ervín Varga **Additional Choreography for Verbunk:** Jeanette Geslison **Music:** Traditional, performed by Mountain Strings **Musical Arrangement:** Peter Jantosciak



PROGRAM



SLOVAKIA: KARIČKATier II Ensemble

Deriving from Parchovany in southeastern Slovakia and meaning “women’s wheel,” this dance is also practiced in Zemplin in northeastern Hungary. The singing and dancing traditionally begin with one or more singers and dancers, and then add more as it progresses, using elliptical variations, inverted circles, and snakelike lines. The Karička dance tradition is still practiced at celebrations and weddings.

Choreography: Ervín Varga **Music:** Traditional **Musical Arrangement:** Peter Jantosciak



CANADA: ATTACHE TA TUQUE!International Folk Dance Ensemble

Using a variety of step dancing from eastern Canada—Ottawa Valley, Cape Breton, and Quebecois styles—this lively fusion of historical and contemporary music and dance revels in complexity and playfulness.

Choreography: Gary Larsen **Music:** “Shoot the Moon” (Ten Strings and a Goat Skin), performed by Mountain Strings **Musical Arrangement:** Mark Geslison



SCOTLAND: MAIRI’S WEDDING 10:00 Ensemble

Mairi’s Wedding is a folk song originally written in Gaelic and later translated into English. Nearly 25 years later, the song was so popular that a Scottish country dance was devised for the tune. It is now a common social reel in Scotland, especially at weddings!

Choreography: Traditional and Emilee Wright **Music:** Traditional (John Bannerman) **Soloist:** Aja Jensen

INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE ENSEMBLE 2025 PERFORMANCES

Jan. 18 University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Ballet Folklórico, McAllen, TX

IFDE/Ballet Folklórico Joint Performance

Jan. 23 Dance Performance Theatre, Provo, UT, 7:30 p.m.

Jan. 24 Dance Performance Theatre, Provo, UT, 7:30 p.m.

Jan. 25 Dance Performance Theatre, Provo, UT, 7:30 p.m.

Mar. 25–26 Winterfest, Mid-Valley Performing Arts Center, 7:00 p.m.

Visit <https://arts.byu.edu/dance/> for more information or to purchase tickets.

Summer Tour

July/August Turkey, Croatia, Italy

PROGRAM



INDIA: GHAR WAAPASI International Folk Dance Ensemble with 9:00 & 10:00 Ensembles

Bollywood is a film industry based in Mumbai, India, and is known for elaborate song-and-dance scenes, extravagant sets and costumes, and melodrama. The Bollywood dance style combines traditional Indian dances with Western contemporary styles such as hip-hop. In our story, a successful warrior returns home to reconnect with a beloved childhood friend. Will his love be returned?

Choreography: Greg Rawlings and Sally Rawlings **Music:** "Malhari" (Sanjay Leela Bhansali with lyrics by Prashant Ingole), recorded by Vishal Dadlani; "Laal Ghagra" (Tanishk Bagchi, Manj Musik, and Herbie Sahara with lyrics by Tanishk Bagchi and Herbie Sahara), recorded by Manj Musik, Herbie Sahara, and Neha Kakkar **Soloists:** Tanner Birtcher and Amy Hawkes

INTERMISSION



SPAIN: TANGOS DE CÁDIZ International Folk Dance Ensemble

Chano Lobato, an old and traditional "Cante" of flamenco music, intertwines the flair of flamenco with the lively spirit of traditional tangos through his music, "Tangos de Santa María." The dance showcases a dynamic interplay between sharp footwork, fluid body movements, and expressive arm gestures, creating an engaging narrative that captivates the audience. The guitar and percussion play an important part within the dance and are why Megumi Pietroniro chose this piece of music to accompany the flamenco dancers.

Choreography: Megumi Viola Pietroniro **Music:** "Al Barrio De Santa María" (traditional), recorded by Chano Lobato **Guest Performer:** Jillian Iverson



PHILIPPINES: MABUHAY! International Folk Dance Ensemble & Tier II Ensemble

"Mabuhay," a Filipino greeting, is usually expressed as "mabuhay!" meaning "to live!" or "live!" or "long live." This diverse Filipino dance medley begins with a Spanish-influenced dance, Jota Quirino, which is brought to life by the clicking of castanets. Next is Pandango Sa Ilaw, where dancers balance candles on their hands and heads, representing fireflies in the night. This is followed by the vibrant and fun Sayaw Sa Bangko, where dancers perform exciting movement while trying to balance on benches. The medley then concludes with the national dance of the Philippines, Tinikling, where dancers imitate the movement of the Tikling bird as they dance between bamboo sticks. Here is to life—Mabuhay!

Concept: Jeanette Geslison **Choreography:** Tana Bybee **Music:** "Jota Quirino" (traditional), recorded by ROFG Rondalla Ensemble; "Pandango Sa Ilaw" and "Sayaw Sa Bangko" (traditional), recorded by RCLA; "Tinikling" (traditional)



PROGRAM



PUERTO RICO: PLENA BORICUA9:00 Ensemble

From Puerto Rico comes the island style of Caribbean music. The movements are adapted from African dances brought to the island. The rhythm of the drums play into the night—whether in the cabanas or on the beautiful sandy beaches.

Choreography: Celia Aguayo **Music:** Traditional



WEST AFRICA: DJOLERhythm N' Soul Collective

Djole is a mask dance usually performed to celebrate a bountiful harvest. It was traditionally played on a square drum called a siko.

Choreography: Ishmael Konney **Music:** Traditional West African drumming **Drummers:** Ishmael Konney (Lead Drummer), Hayden Greene, Asia Collins, Janelle Dadson, Gracious Ncube



USA: HAPPY DANCE! Rocky Mountain Express Cloggers, International Folk Dance Ensemble, and Folk Dance Club Students

American clogging is truly a melting pot of cultures and influences, and through the years it continues to evolve. In this piece, you will see high-energy footwork, with both traditional and modern steps, complemented by various dance elements. Rocky Mountain Express Cloggers, 37-time National Clogging Champions, join forces with the BYU folk dancers for a toe-tapping spectacle!

Choreography: Greg Tucker and Maria Tucker **Music:** "Happy Dance" (Barry Graul, Bart Millard, Ben Glover, David Garcia, Mike Scheuchzer, Nathan Cochran, Robby Shaffer, and Solomon Olds), recorded by MercyMe; "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (John Francis Wade), recorded by Pentatonix

CHRISTMAS MUSIC INTERLUDE: EVERYBODY'S WAITIN' Mountain Strings

Music: "Everybody's Waiting for the Man in the Bag" (Irving Taylor, Dudley Brooks, and Hal Stanley)

Musical Arrangement: Mark Geslison



USA: THE BREAKAWAY RAG International Folk Dance Ensemble

This Charleston-style tap dance hearkens back to the Jazz Age.

Choreography: Jacob Madsen **Music:** "Ain't She Sweet" (Milton Ager and Jack Yellen), performed by Mountain Strings **Musical Arrangement:** Mark Geslison **Soloists:** Clara Smilanick and Dallin Lyon



USA: CHARLESTON International Folk Dance Ensemble & 2:00 Ensemble

The Charleston dance craze of the 1920s was popularized by the rhythms of James P. Johnson's tune "The Charleston." It was made popular in the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem, one of the first integrated dance halls.

Choreography: Colleen West, with Emily Hatch **Music:** "Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue" (Ray Henderson), performed by Mountain Strings **Musical Arrangement:** Mark Geslison



UKRAINE: MY UKRAINE Mountain Strings

Music: "Odessa Mama" and "Milenkiy Druzhocek" (traditional) **Musical Arrangement:** Dean Marshall, Nate Olson, and Mark Geslison

NATIVITY DEMONSTRATION



UKRAINE: HOPAK International Folk Dance Ensemble

Recognized as the national dance of Ukraine, Hopak was performed exclusively by men in the 15th and 16th centuries during the famous Cossack period. By the 19th century, women had become a regular part of the dance, adding to the vivacious spirit of this Ukrainian hallmark.

Choreography: Colleen West, Jeanette Geslison, with Edwin G. Austin, Jr. **Music:** Traditional, performed by the Intermountain Symphony Orchestra **Musical Arrangement:** Tyler Castleton and Daniel Lee

FINALE Full Cast

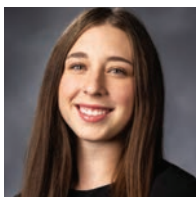
Staging: Emilee Wright **Music:** "Everybody's Waiting for the Man in the Bag" (Irving Taylor, Dudley Brooks, and Hal Stanley) **Musical Arrangement:** Mark Geslison



BYU INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE ENSEMBLE



Lizzie Beard
Toole, Utah
PSYCHOLOGY*



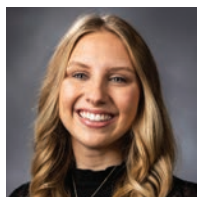
Brielle Comp
Mesa, Arizona
ACCOUNTING



Ellie Erickson
Holladay, Utah
ACCOUNTING



Emily Hanson
Hughson, California
MARKETING



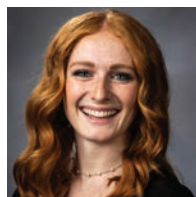
Amy Hawkes
LaGrange, Georgia
COMMUNICATION
DISORDERS



Camila Losik
Layton, Utah
PSYCHOLOGY*



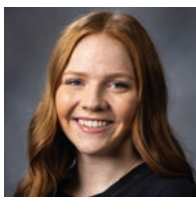
Natalie Lund
Provo, Utah
UX DESIGN



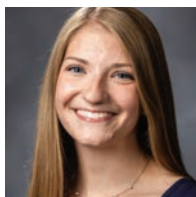
Amy Nattress
Sandy, Utah
EXERCISE AND WELLNESS*



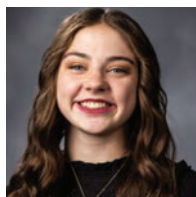
Savannah Savage
Draper, Utah
EXPERIENCE DESIGN &
MANAGEMENT *



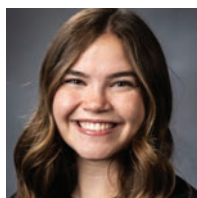
Clara Smilanick
Roseville, California
SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION



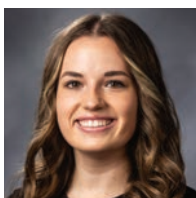
Sierra Stahly
Overland Park, Kansas
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION BA



Bailey Tucker
Orem, Utah
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT*



Emma V. Richardson
Kaysville, Utah
PUBLIC RELATIONS*



Carly Wanlass
Lehi, Utah
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION*

*Cultural Dance minors

BYU INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE ENSEMBLE



Bryce Barker

Appleton, Wisconsin

EXERCISE AND WELLNESS*



Tanner Birtcher

Wheaton, Illinois

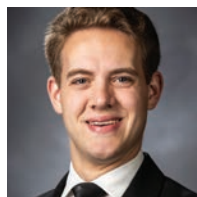
MOLECULAR BIOLOGY



Alex Beard

Sedalia, Missouri

ACCOUNTING



Tyson Boxer

Manassess, Virginia

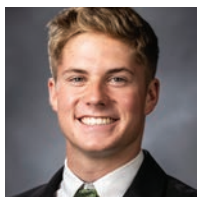
MATHEMATICS EDUCATION



Nate Cox

American Fork, Utah

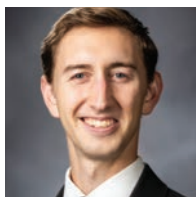
ACTUARIAL SCIENCE*



Samuel Devenport

Payson, Utah

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



Christian Devey

Orem, Utah

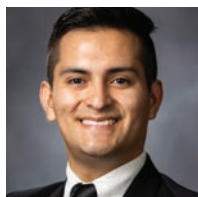
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING



Cael Erickson

Spanish Fork, UT

APPLIED AND
COMPUTATIONAL
MATHEMATICS*



Piero Gongora

Chimbote, Peru

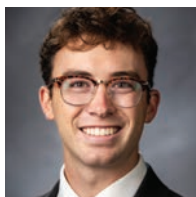
MANUFACTURING
ENGINEERING



Levi Hancock

Fairborn, Ohio

PHYSICS



Samuel Lindsay

Sandy, Utah

COMMUNICATION
DISORDERS



Shaun Hicken

Pleasant Valley, Utah

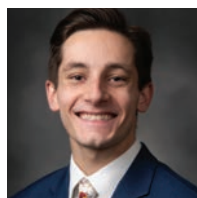
MARKETING



Dallin Lyon

Firestone, Colorado

MUSIC DANCE THEATRE*



Anthony Xanthos

Beaverton, Oregon

EXERCISE SCIENCE

**Cultural Dance minors*

ADDITIONAL DANCE ENSEMBLES

9:00 ENSEMBLE

Mason Angerbauer
Audrey Bendixsen
Charlie Blodgett
Trevor Briones
Sophia Budge
Vallie Bulow
Benjamin Christensen
Mary Danneman
Warren Ellsworth
Alyssa Epling
George Eppel
Emily Foutz
Rome Greenmun
David Heap
Irving Hernandez
Hannah Hinton
Liana Jankovich
Olivia Kartchner
Fynnley Keckley
Lily Kelson
Nate Lehnhof
Ellie Nelson
Siena Partridge
Josh Poyfair
Elizabeth Rampton
Dalton Rencher
Ethan Schaub
Lily Schwebach
Callie Smith
Nicholas Smith
Joseph Tarkington

Director:

Kierica McPherson

TAs:

*Camila Losik
Davin Sharp*

10:00 ENSEMBLE

Hyrum Barber
Liz Beckwith
Julianne Biery
Spencer Birch
Tegwen Bryan
Cade Cannon
Noelle Cobia
Eli Ellsworth
Sterling Erbstoesser
Samantha Farnsworth
Sandra Franco
Emilia Gregory
Justin Hancock
Adam Hill
Aja Jensen
Ocean Kwak
Heidi Lasson
Andrew LaRue
Nathan Lasson
Sydney Maxfield
Ivin McDonald
Lucy Mortensen
Lucy Mower
Emma Plank
Norman Rasmussen
Clark Robertson
Millie Scholzen
Sydney Smith
Jon Sterling
Alexey Tyltin
Renée Young
Ben Washburn

Director:

Emilee Wright

TAs:

*Natalie Lund
Christian Devey*

2:00 ENSEMBLE

Hallie Allred
Bo Brundige
Nathan Caldwell
William Carlson
Emily Christensen
Cory Clay
Taytum Coons
Selena Dutton
Colin Fernandez
Amberlee Gutke
Blake Jenkins
Spencer Llana
Dallin Lucas
Maria McRae
Tanner Meeks
Liam Miller
Emma Nilsson
Lucy Peltz
Josh Pitt
Suzanne Pontious
Arthur Prusso
Lydia Pullan
Erik Reschke
Madison Reschke
Grace Richards
Alison Robins
Landon Shumway
Connor Smith
Rebecca Smith
Eric Upton-Rowley
Isabella Villalobos
Emily Winegar
Annelise Wooley
Jem Zuniga

Director:

Amy Jex

TAs:

*Brooke Slagle
Bryce Barker*

TIER 2 ENSEMBLE

Abbey Kammerman Blossil
Megan Buxton
Emma Call
Madeline Card
Emily Carruth
Grant Fletcher
Ellie Geslison
Preston Hancock
Isaac Hendrickson
Adam Jewell
Courtney Jenkins
Devin Killian
Brendan Lewis
Kosette McPherson
Abigail Merrill
Eliza Morris
Andrew Ogden
Carson Petrie
Isaac Pimentel
Nicholas Peterson
Connor Phillips
Claire Rose
Davin Sharp
Jessica Spencer
Soren Stolle
Winters Stephens
Betsy Richardson
Kayla Wong

Director: *Amy Jex*

Rehearsal Assistant:

Anthony Xanthos

MOUNTAIN STRINGS



Tyler Anderson
Roseburg, OR
 CONSTRUCTION
 MANAGEMENT



Madeline Charles
Lehi, UT
 ADVERTISING



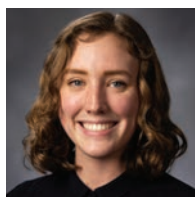
Jared Ferrin
Worcester, MA
 STRING PERFORMANCE



Ellie Geslison*
Provo, UT
 SOCIOLOGY



Arthur Prusso
Holladay, UT
 DANCE BA



Emily Wall
Gainsville, VA
 BIOINFOMATICS

**Cultural Dance minors*

GUEST MUSICIANS

HIGHLAND PIPER *Jeff McClellan*

BYU JAZZ VOICES

BYU Jazz Voices is the school's premier vocal jazz ensemble within the Commercial Music Division in the School of Music. Under the direction of Hayley Kirkland, Jazz Voices performs a variety of jazz, blues, and pop music, emphasizing close vocal harmonies, cutting-edge repertoire, and improvisation.

Singers *Alia Ebbert, Logan Stats, Alyssa Hightower,
 Anna Egbert, Coby Sandholtz, Ian Pratt*

Violin *Katherine Skouson*

Flute *Naomi Wall*

Clarinet & Saxophone *Enoch Thornock*

Slide Whistle *George Eppel*

Orchestral Cymbal *Dallin Lyon*

GUEST DANCERS



RHYTHM N' SOUL COLLECTIVE

Rhythm N' Soul Collective (RSC) aspires to build the kingdom of God through love, connection, and the transformative power of the arts. True to its name, the group started as a collective of students invested in Africana song and dance. RSC members passionately explore, celebrate, and share the diverse traditions of the African diaspora. Founded in 2023 by Fatwa Luka and JRay Kuhn, the purpose of the group is to create a space of belonging. Their work cultivates leadership, empathy, and spirituality through the cultural arts. RSC is a space for all students to find community, a greater sense of self, and wholesome fun. For more information, follow the group on Instagram @therscollective. Performers: Hannah Bryan, Alexandria Byrd, Asia Collins, Janelle Dadson, Michael Forvil, Henrietta Gabriel, Alicia Goff, Hayden Greene, Jewel Hatch-Killpack, Bryanna Larnyoh, Jonathan Marker, Kinselle Merrill, Gracious Ncube, Safiyo Pinnock, Wendy Riley-Washington, Lesley Slue, Morgan Wilbert, Lilly Williams



ROCKY MOUNTAIN EXPRESS CLOGGERS

Rocky Mtn. Express Cloggers recently celebrated 25 years as a top-decorated clogging studio in the United States, currently holding 37 National Champion team titles. RME strives to preserve the traditional styles and steps of clog dancing and the heritage of this American dance form. At the same time, RME also pushes creativity to bring about new and exciting choreography in the competition world. RME is directed and taught by Greg and Maria Tucker, many-times-over Duet National Clogging Champions. RME has been featured on stages across the world and on TV and film, including in the well-known GEICO "clogging" commercial! These dancers are thrilled and honored to be a part of Christmas Around the World! RME Cloggers: McKenzie Bellon, Malia Blackwell, Alisha Davis, Mara Erickson, Jillian Iverson, Ellie Jones, Kierica McPherson, Abbie Scott, Lauren Tippetts, Bailey Tucker, Breelyn Tucker, Greg Tucker, Halle Tucker, Maria Tucker, Olivia Tucker, Taylor Tucker, Heather Woodbury, Alicia Woolsey

SPANISH DANCE EXPERIENCE

In the winter of 2023, a small group of us students spoke of a dream of one day traveling to Spain to immerse ourselves in the rich and passionate art of flamenco, learning it at its source. Despite our limited resources as university students, our shared love for cultural dance, fluency in Spanish, and ambition drove us to make this plan a reality. The project would involve traveling to Madrid, taking private classes from a professional flamenco teacher, and conducting research on flamenco dance to bring the spirit of flamenco back to BYU. After a year and a half of preparation, this dream became a reality, thanks to generous funding from BYU. Together, Clara Jamison, Levi Hancock, Jillian Iverson, and our director Jeanette Geslison embarked on this unforgettable experience.

In June 2024, we participated in five intensive, 3-hour sessions at the Sara Martin Flamenco Studio, located just outside central Madrid. Our instructor, Megumi Viola, an experienced flamenco dancer and a scholar of dance pedagogy, taught us everything from the fundamentals of flamenco dance to the structure that the dance must follow as it calls and responds with the instrumentalists and singers. We were instructed specifically in the tangos style of flamenco dance, which is a style that is characterized by rhythmic clapping and footwork and consistent structure of verses and refrains. These instructions became the foundation of a 4-minute small-group choreography, which we will proudly perform in Christmas Around the World.

Beyond our classes, we immersed ourselves further in flamenco culture. We visited a professional costumer, interviewed our instructor and the studio owner, and attended an extraordinary live flamenco performance, complete with dancers, musicians, and singers.

This weeklong journey was deeply enriching and educational. Upon returning, we were honored to share what we learned. At BYU's Summer Folk Dance Camp, we taught the history of flamenco and a simplified choreography to over 70 enthusiastic children. Our own Jillian Iverson has also been invited as a guest instructor to teach flamenco at the International Dance Arts Collective in California. Our hope is that this project will continue to inspire others as we bring the beauty and spirit of flamenco to audiences around the world.

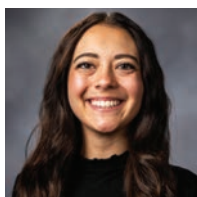




CULTURAL DANCE CHOREOGRAPHERS



Mateus Arruda



Tana Bybee



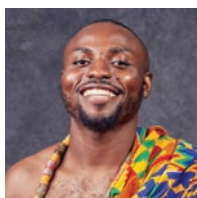
Jeanette Geslison



Emily Hatch



Amy Jex



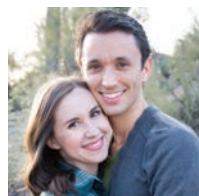
Ishmael Konney



Gary Larsen



Megumi Viola
Pietroniro



Greg and Sally
Rawlings



Greg and Maria
Tucker



Ervin Varga



Steven Lee Weintraub



Priscila Werner



Colleen Nelson West



Emilee Wright

*Scan the QR code on
the back cover of this
program to read our
choreographers' bios.*

DANCE DIRECTORS

Jeanette Geslison

Artistic Director
International Folk Dance Ensemble

Amy Jex

Director
Tier II Ensemble, 2:00 Ensemble

Emilee Wright

Director
10:00 Ensemble

Kierica McPherson

Director
9:00 Ensemble

Spencer Waddell

Rehearsal Assistant
International Folk Dance Ensemble

Anthony Xanthos

Rehearsal Assistant
Tier II Ensemble

GUEST & MUSIC DIRECTORS

Mark Geslison

Artistic Director, Mountain Strings

Hayley Kirkland

Artistic Director, Jazz Voices

Greg and Maria Tucker

Artistic Directors, Rocky Mountain Express Cloggers

Kori Wakamatsu

Faculty Mentor, Rhythm N' Soul Collective

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Artistic Director Jeanette Geslison

Music Director Mark Geslison

Scriptwriter Belle Frahm

Production Mgr./Scenic Designer Benjamin Sanders

Technical Director John Shurtleff

Prod. Stage Manager Crysta May Lamb

Lighting Designer Mark Ohran

Projection Designer Erin Bjorn

Sound Design & Recording Troy Sales

Production Assistant Valeria Jenks

Assistant Stage Manager Abraham Gutierrez

Deck Crew Emily Jay and Lydia Stewart

Lightboard Operator Allison Bertasso

Voice-Overs Langi Tuifua, Zofia Lacka, Victoria Amponsah Blay, Saritha Ignatius, Emma Marusakova, Rose Bybee, Vanubia Siller, Rachael Harper, Yevheniia Webb, Joanna Lewis, Izaskun De Sas Carrera, Christian Devey, Keishlian Tanairi Cruz Santiago, Dominika Kopecká, Steven Weintraub

Vignette Acting Coach: Rodger Sorensen

Costume Coordinator Amanda Alley

Costume Shop Manager Dawn Maughan

Costume Shop Staff Allison Farnsworth, Nina Perkins, Aryanna Brown, Marianne Thompson

Camel Puppet Designer: Nat Reed

Audio Engineer Gabriella Warnick

Audio Assistant Justin Small

Audio Support Troy Streeter and Tiffany Parker

Lighting Support Mark Ohran and McKenzie Wise

Projection Support Kevin Anthony

Stage Operations Support Jared Patching

Photography Jaren Wilkey, BYU Photo

Promotional Video Scott Cook

Video Recording Scott Cook

Marketing Services Mgr. Rex Kocherhans

Creative Services Mgr. Marin McKay Barney

Preshow Coordinator Kierica McPherson

Matinee Preshow Coordinator Greg Tucker

Alumni Reception Jared Fugal

COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Dean

Ed Adams

Associate Dean

Amy Petersen Jensen

Assistant Dean

Melinda Semadeni

Director, Marketing and Production

Troy Streeter

Associate Dean

Jeremy Grimshaw

Assistant Dean

Thaylene Rogers

BRAVO! Producer and Presenter

Lyndsay Keith

Associate Dean

Eric Gillett

Assistant Dean

Don Powell

DEPARTMENT OF DANCE

Full-Time Faculty

Shayla Bott,

Department Chair

Adam Dyer, Amy Jex

Associate Chairs

Nathan Balser

Liz Dibble

Jeanette Geslison

Curt Holman

Ashley Ivory Parov

Karen Jensen

Brent Keck

Marin Leggat Roper

Kate Monson

Keely Song

Brooke Storheim

Kori Wakamatsu

Hilary Wolfley

Cultural Dance Faculty

Full-Time:

Jeanette Geslison

Amy Jex

Adjunct:

Lindsay Broadbent

Turner

Tamara Chamberlain

Kaika Cole

Cynthia Gubler

Kellianne Hinkle

Wendi Isaacson

Ashley Jex

Becki Love

Kierica McPherson

Tyler Persson

Channing Spotts

John Paul Storrs

Chante Stutznegger

Filemonii Tiatia

Greg Tucker

Maria Tucker

Kau'i Tuia

Aileen Villalba

Spencer Waddell

Emilee Wright

Student Instructors:

Makeila Morgan

Dance Medicine and Wellness

Director:

Brenda Critchfield

Assistant Athletic Trainer:

Annie Christofferson

Kyra Cox



Help us continue the unifying tradition of BYU Folk Dance. Scan the QR code or visit give.byu.edu/folkdance today. We are grateful for your support!

There's so much more to celebrate!



Scan the QR code above for

- Choreographers' bios
- Summer Dance Camp info
- Staying connected with alumni
- IFDE scholarship recipients
- Cultural dance classes at BYU



Follow us online to receive frequent updates on what we're working on, to stay in the loop on club happenings, and to get to know our team members.

Instagram: **@byu_folkdance**



Greetings to our Folk Dance Alumni! Join us for a reception in the Hinckley Center Ballroom following December 7th's 2:00 p.m. matinee performance!



Stay connected to IFDE Alumni! BYU International Folk Dance Ensemble has been going strong since 1956. Our alumni website features a complete collection of *Christmas Around the World* posters and programs through the years. Catch up with changing club news by reading the archived *The Folk Dancer* club newsletters. Where in the world have the folk dancers toured? Read those past tour histories and locations, and see those colorful group photos. Our "In Memoriam" page remembers those of our folk dance family who are no longer with us. Always available on the website is the calendar of upcoming folk dance performances and tours. We hope you will explore this website and share its treasures.