



The Folk Dancer



The Official Newsletter of the BYU Folk Dance Alumni

Spring 2025

'Tis The Season!

Christmas Around the World 2024



Credit to BYU Photo

Christmas Around the World 2024, 'Tis the Season featured 193 student performers and guests! The guest groups were Rocky Mountain Express Cloggers, Rhythm 'N Soul Collective (with guest drummer and choreographer Ishmel Konney), and BYU Jazz Voices!

New choreographies this year:



Shchedryk - Ukraine by Amy Jex

Credit: Katie Bruce Sorenson

Important Dates

- **Alumni REC Night**
 - March 19 @ 7-8:30 pm
 - 270/278 Richards Building on BYU Campus
- **Journey: Reflections**
 - March 25-26: Mid-Valley Performing Arts Center, Taylorsville, UT
 - Find tickets [here](#).
- **Spring Festival of Nations**
 - April 9: Dance Performance Theater, Richards Building, BYU campus, Provo, UT
- **Traditionz Showcase**
 - April 16: Rooms 270/278 Richards Building, BYU campus, Provo, UT
- **Children's Folk Dance Camp**
 - June 9-11, 2025
 - <https://folkdancecamp.ce.byu.edu/home>
- **Summer Tour 2025**
 - July 23-Aug. 7: Cori, Italy Latium Festival
 - Aug. 8-15: Apiro, Italy Terranostra Festival

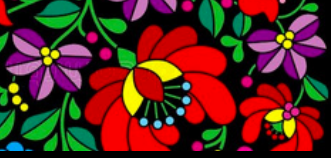
Traditionz is Coming!

Traditionz is currently preparing for its' 2025 show, "Fun and Games," featuring dances from South Africa, Colombia, Ukraine, Slovakia, Mexico, Turkey, Scandinavia and the USA.

We have a handful of openings left in May if you would like to book a performance at your (Utah) elementary school.

Contact Amy Jex at byutraditionz@gmail.com if you are interested.





Bailares Gaúchos - Southern Brazil
by Mateus Arruda & Priscila Werner



Attache Ta Tuque! - Canada
by Gary Larsen



Tangos De Cádiz - Spain
by Megumi Pietroniro



Ghar Waapasi - India
by Greg & Sally Rawlings



Chanukah Shimcha - Yiddish
by Steven Weintraub



Credit: Katie Bruce Sorenson

Rhythm 'N Soul Collective



Rocky Mountain Express Cloggers

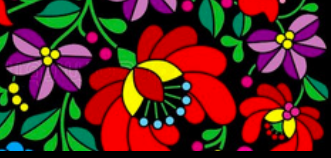


Credit: Katie Bruce Sorenson



CAW Alumni Reception

It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces at the alumni reception this year!



2024-2025 Scholarship Winners

- **Mary Bee Jensen Scholarship**
 - Levi Hancock
- **Pardoe-Anderson Performance Scholarship**
 - Amy Hawkes
- **Performance Missionary Award**
 - Anthony Xanthos
- **Cherill Liptak Scholarship**
 - Cami Losik & Piero Gongora
- **Harman Award**
 - Dallin Lyon
- **Folk Dance Alumni Scholarship**
 - Nate Cox
- **The Spirit of Folk Dance Scholarship**
 - Bailey Tucker
- **Colleen West Percussive Footwork Scholarship**
 - Carly Wanlass
- **Bridgebuilder Scholarship**
 - Brielle Comp
- **Mark & Lisle Arnold Outstanding Mentor Award**
 - Tanner Birtcher
- **Lighting the World Through Folk Dance Award**
 - Clara Jamison



CONGRATULATIONS!

Additional Folk Dance Costumer Needed!



The dance department is looking for an additional costumer for the folk dancers. Look out for a job posting soon!

Alumni Giving Opportunity

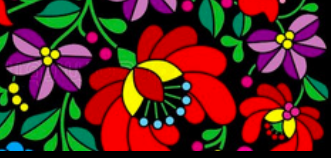
Please consider donating to one of the IFDE funds to help fund scholarships, future tours, etc.

- Click [here](#) to donate.
- Click “Search Other Funds” and enter the code 301501376.
- This pulls up the endowment fund “International Folk Dance Ensemble Touring - BYU”.
- In the “Search Other Funds” field, you can also enter “folk dance”. This will pull up several other funds you can donate to.
 - Delynne B. and Garth H. Peay World Dance Scholarship Fund - BYU
 - Folk Dance Alumni Replenishment Grant
 - Folk Dance Alumni
- Click “+Add”, then enter an amount in the appropriate box at the top of the page and continue filling out the form.

Announcements

- The **Delynne & Garth Peay Scholarship** has now been endowed and will provide scholarships in perpetuity for student performers!!!
- We would love to increase the **Mary Bee Jensen endowment** to provide full tuition scholarships to two students each year (we currently provide 1/2 tuition scholarships to two students each year).
- It looks like **Christmas Around the World** will stay in the Marriott Center (as opposed to moving to the new Arts Building Theater in 2026 as was originally planned).
- In 2026 we mark **70 years of the BYU Folk Dance** program! More to come!





New from Ukraine!

Two new Ukrainian pieces will be premiered in Christmas Around the World 2025!

Tymothy Jaddock came in February 2025 to set the choreographies.

1. Kupala for IFDE - a Poltava piece based on the spring ritual of Ivana Kupala.
2. Arkan for Traditionz - a men's piece from the Hutsul region.

A new set of costumes for Kupala are being constructed in Ukraine right now!

On the Road Early!

Mid-semester tour was in November 2024 this year to Idaho and Oregon! It was a whirlwind to prepare a full show so early in the year, but the students pulled it off! They were incredibly adaptable with different stages shapes and sizes. Thank you to the many alumni who came out to our performances!

- 6 performances of Journey: Reflections
 - Total of approx. 3,200 audience members
- 5 outreach performances:
 - Total of approx. 550 participants

Response to the performances/outreaches was overwhelmingly positive. Some audience comments...

"I came home from work at 6:30 pm and my son just begged me to take him to the show. We ran here."

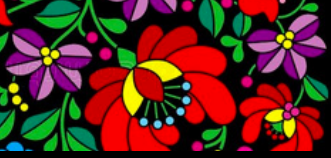
-Audience member in The Dalles, OR



"Hopak was beautiful. You made me so proud. You represented my people and culture so amazingly well."

- Ukrainian woman in Eugene, OR





The Folk Dancer - Spring 2025



"I came home from work at 6:30 pm and my son just begged me to take him to the show. We ran here." - Audience member in The Dalles, OR



"The performance was incredible and fabulous, as well as the group. We were all so impressed with how the group was not only the dancers/performers but the setup and take down crew! The performers were so positive, humble and happy! They showed deep gratitude for the meals that were provided to them... Many people have said that we didn't charge enough for a performance of that caliber!

Please tell everyone thank you so much for blessing us with your talent! You are truly touched our little town and central Oregon! I know that you all truly captured my heart! I'm so grateful to have gotten to spend the day with the group and just fell in love with you all!"

-Mel Petterson

Sisters School Board Secretary



Stay Connected

Visit our website at byufolkdancealumni.com to see Tour Histories, CAW programs and posters, newsletters, the archives, and more! We also have a "[BYU Folk Dance Alumni](#)" Facebook group. Join us!

Stay up-to-date with the current team:

- [BYU Folk Dance](#) on Facebook
- [byu_folkdance](#) on Instagram
- [byufolkdance](#) on Tiktok
- [BYU International Folk Dance](#) on Youtube

Aren't getting our emails? Then please email alumni@byufolkdancealumni.com



Reunited and It Feels So Good!

By Jeanette Geslison

During CAW 2023, BYU's IFDE welcomed Ballet Folkorico from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) to collaborate with the Living Legends for a suite of dances.

In January, 2025, Ballet Folklorico invited IFDE to come perform in McAllen, Texas in a collaborative cultural dance concert entitled: "Huateque". Sixteen dancers from the BYU International Folk Dance Ensemble were invited to perform with UTRG Ballet Folklorico (approx. 40 dancers). IFDE performed several pieces and they performed several. The concert ended with a finale number which was a collaborative percussive dance piece choreographed by Greg and Maria Tucker.

The two groups spent the day rehearsing and then warmed up together on the stage prior to the concert. Then the groups prayed together. One BYU dancer in English and one UTRGV dancer in Spanish. It was wonderful to share our different religious beliefs (their dancers are mostly Catholic). There was an immense support for one another and outreach to deepen friendship. The student performers watched each other from the wings during the concert in admiration and support. It was an honor to share the stage with such a high-quality dance ensemble, and to feel unified through our unique cultural university dance programs. People in McAllen have not seen much





cultural dance besides folklorico style, so they were so impressed and thrilled to expand their experience.

The arts manager shared with me how impressed he was with our group and with our social media presence. Audience responses were highly positive and enthusiastic, with a standing ovation. They lingered with the dancers in the lobby for nearly an hour taking photos and talking to one another. One UTRGV dancer’s parents said that the BYU dancers gave UTRGV’s dancers a “run for their money!” The chair of the UTRGV Dance Department Dana Shackelford was in attendance and was very generous in her feedback.

Student Perspectives:

“The collaboration with the UTRGV Ballet Folklorico ensemble was one of the highlights of my college dance experience. I enjoyed being able to work so closely with a very talented collegiate group that also appreciates the importance of preserving and presenting cultural dance on stage. I particularly enjoyed interacting with the dancers off stage to learn more about their Mexican heritage as they shared with us a lot of their traditional food and recreational dance styles. The connections we made and experiences we had together with the UTRGV dancers are ones I will always fondly look back on.”

-Levi Hancock

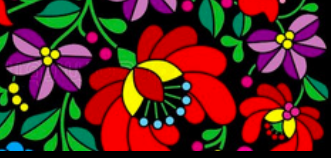
“The UTRGV trip was incredible. It was a privilege to perform along with such a talented group of dancers who are so passionate about their culture and Mexican dance. I learned not only about the various dances that come from all around Mexico, but also learned how to be passionate and loving of ancestors that are represented through traditional folk dance. I loved feeling the kindness they had for one another and their families and felt inspired to implement that in my dancing and relationships. It was inspiring to see that our Church and university aren’t the only ones that value the saying “the world is our campus”.

-Tanner Birtcher

“One of my favorite moments of the trip happened right before we performed together... our teams came together and said two prayers in a big circle with all of us holding hands. At the end of the day all of us dancers may come from different backgrounds, religions, and schools, but in this moment we were all holding hands united and bonded over the fact that we are praising God for letting us have the opportunity to represent so many cultures that we love.”



IFDE at the McAllen Texas Temple



Folk Dance Rewind: 1967-1968

As part of our newsletter, we would like to highlight some fun moments from years past that can be found in our BYU Folk Dance Archives.



Karen Bailey, Donna Shultz



Chris Johannes



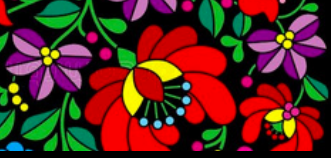
Chris Johnson, Garth Peay



Christmas Around the World - Russian



BYU Homecoming Parade



Folk Dance Rewind: 1967-1968



Band: Mark Rasmussen, Chris Nokleby, Milt Brinton, John Seymour



Lucille Davies, Brent Hall, Trudy Woods, Dennis Cobia



DeAnn Rasmussen, Jon Larson, Margaret Homer, Jim Christensen, Mary Ann Didericksen, Dale Wood, Barbara Bingham, Mike Andelin



Pat Hoge, Kim Nielsen, Holly Grant



Belgium, Schoten parade



Middelkerke, Belgium - Barbara Bingham, Mike Andelin, Mimi Ford, Nina Woodbury, Garth Peay, Stephanie Stewart, Susan Payne, Chuck West



Tarcento, Italy Parade



Warffum, Holland - Mary Bee Jensen & Chuck West



Aalborg, Denmark - Chuck West, Kim Nielsen, Holly Grant



Warffum, Holland - Jon Larsen & Dennis Cobia w/ local boys