

# CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### CHOREOGRAPHERS' BIOS

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**Breanna Daniels** holds a BA in Dance from Brigham Young University (BYU), where she performed with the International Folk Dance Ensemble. Here she taught workshops around the United States and on tour to Southeast Asia. Breanna is currently an adjunct faculty member in the Cultural Dance area at BYU, as well as a founding director of World Dance Company LLC, where she is artistic director, choreographer, and rehearsal specialist. She is also Ballet Artistic Director for a dance studio in Springville, while also fulfilling invitations to teach, choreograph, and provide masterclasses at many studios throughout Utah.

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**Cristian Florescu** was born in Bucharest, Romania. He started dancing in 1982 with different Romanian folk ensembles and studied with various specialists, including Theodor Vasilescu. Cristian was principal dancer with the National Ensemble Cununa Carpatilor. In 1990-91, he received his certificate as a recognized solo dancer and choreographer in the field of folklore from the Romanian Ministry of Culture and the ACAFR. In 1993, he joined Les Sortilèges, a professional folk dance company based in Montreal Canada, where he has danced, taught and choreographed.

**Sonia Dion** was born in Quebec and has been a professional dancer for over 20 years. She was lead dancer, choreographer and artistic director, among other roles for Les Sortileges dance company; Canada's oldest professional folk dance ensemble, with whom she developed several new productions. Sonia has toured worldwide and has been exposed to a wide range of dance techniques, including Romanian folk dance, Scottish Highland dancing, French-Canadian step dance and ballroom dance.

It was at Les Sortilèges that the two met and formed a professional and personal partnership. They have taught at l'École Supérieure de Danse du Québec, and have been part of the Artists in the Schools program sponsored by the Quebec Ministry of Education.

In recent years, Cristian and Sonia have developed a specific interest in working with recreational folk dance groups. They've been teaching in Brazil, Canada and the United States, Europe (Austria, Belgium, England, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Switzerland and the Netherlands), Asia (Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Singapore and Taiwan) to share their love of Romanian folk traditions. They have taught workshops in Canada and the United States and choreographed Romanian suites for performing groups, including the world-renowned BYU Folk Dance Ensemble in Utah.

**Jeanette Geslison** is Associate Professor of Dance at Brigham Young University (BYU), where she currently serves as Artistic Director of the International Folk Dance Ensemble (IFDE). Jeanette has taught in the University setting since 1995 with an emphasis in cultural dance. A native from Odense, Denmark she trained in classical ballet at the Odense Ballet Academy with other early training in jazz, tap dance, and child acting roles. Her pursuit of dance brought her to the United States and Brigham Young University where she earned her BA and MA degrees in dance. In 2016 Jeanette received her MFA in Performing Arts Dance from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where she presented her choreographic thesis entitled: "Hungarian Dance Works."

Cultural representation—its preservation, adaptation and modification—lies at the heart of her academic research and choreographic interest. She investigates meanings of identity in cross-cultural dance expression, and the impact of intent and context in traditional dance. Jeanette's choreographic works are a direct expression of these investigations. She produces, and directs full length dance productions, and has taught workshops, master classes, and presented papers nationally and internationally. She is immediate past-president of the National Folk Organization, a board member of International Council of Organization of Folklore Festivals and Folk Arts (CIOFF) USA, and a member of International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) Study Group on Ethnochoreology.

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**Tymothy Jaddock** is a former corps de ballet member of the Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance Company of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. While in Cheremosh, Jaddock danced various corps de ballet and soloist roles, performing original works by Ballet Master Mykola Kanevets and classic Ukrainian dance canon by Pavlo Virsky. Jaddock toured across Canada and the United States with the company while also teaching and directing character dance and ballet programming at various dance studios in Alberta.

Jaddock also completed a year-long dance residency and training program in Ukraine. Jaddock held residencies with various universities and state ensembles across the country studying ballet, character, and Ukrainian folk dance in the cities of Kyiv, L'viv, Lutsk, Chernivtsi, and Poltava.

Tym holds an M.A. in Dance Education and Ballet Pedagogy at New York University in collaboration with American Ballet Theatre (ABT). Jaddock is an ABT National Training Curriculum certified teacher in Pre-Primary to Level 5 and holds a certificate in Choreography and Character dance from the L'viv College of Culture and Arts. Jaddock has worked as a dance instructor, dance director, and dance adjudicator across Canada and has developed a Ukrainian folk dance curriculum with a focus on culturally responsive teaching in the dance classroom. Jaddock's research has been sponsored in part by the Taras Shevchenko Foundation and the NYU Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development.

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**Amy Jex** is an Assistant Professor in the BYU Department of Dance. She is in her 10th year as Director of Traditionz, a cultural dance outreach performance ensemble, and serves as Area Coordinator of the Cultural Dance Area. Amy received her early dance training at the Ballet West Academy and Janet Gray Studios. She holds a B.A. in Humanities and an M.A. in Dance from Brigham Young University. Amy's research interests include pedagogy, dance history, Ukrainian and Russian dance, Indian dance, character dance, and tap dance. She is an active member of the National Folk Organization and National Dance Education Organization. Outside of BYU, Amy has

been a guest instructor, presenter, adjudicator, and/or choreographer for Regional Dance America-Pacific, Utah Dance Education Organization, Mountain West Ballet, the International Dance Council (CID-UNESCO), and many school and church groups.

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**Zsolt Juhász:** Szeged-born dancer/choreographer Zsolt Juhász pursued his studies in folk dance pedagogy at the Hungarian Dance Academy between 1997 and 2000. He became the head choreographer at the Duna Dance Workshop in 1999, and was named artistic director of the Duna Art Ensemble in 2007. In the company's contemporary dance theatre productions, he has fused the wealth of forms from Hungarian folk dance with techniques from modern movement theatre. His ensemble regularly tours Hungary and other countries with the aim of instilling an interest in folk dance across broad sectors of the population. Over the course of his career he has been recognised for his work with numerous honours, having received several choreography and audience awards, as well as the Harangozó Award in 2003 and the Zoltán Imre Award in 2006. In 2007 he was decorated with the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary.

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**Joseph Kroupa** is the Dance Director of Tisza Ensemble, in Washington, D.C., where he teaches and performs Hungarian, Romanian, and Romani folk dances. Frustrated by the lack of structured steps at high school dances, Joseph was lucky enough to meet and fall in love with international folk dancing. Several years of dancing and touring with BYU's International Folk Dance Ensemble strengthened that relationship and it blossomed into a life-long commitment. He is especially passionate about the dances of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, and relishes the rich cultural diversity of the D.C. area, which provides a steady stream of learning opportunities. Joseph particularly enjoys the noisy aspects of folk dancing—stomping, slapping, clapping, jingling, yelling, drumming—and aspires to be one of the loudest folk dancers on the East Coast. When not dancing, Joseph moonlights as an attorney.

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**Michael Malich** grew up in the St. Sava Serbian Orthodox community in Milwaukee, WI, where he has been a lifelong member of Sumadija Serbian Folk Dance Ensemble, and its artistic director since 1997. Michael was a dancer with the Duquesne University Tamburitzans, and has continued to increase his folk dance acumen by attending Serbian folklore seminars in Europe. Michael has been a guest choreographer for The Tamburitzans, BYU International Folk Dance Ensemble, Ethnic Dance Theatre, and various Serbian Folk Dance Groups. Preserving Serbian folk culture in America is very important to Michael, and his ensemble has hosted the North American Serbian Folklore Seminar in Milwaukee for the past 5 years.

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**Miguel Peña**, originally from Reynosa, Mexico, is a graduate from the University of Texas-Pan American where he got his bachelor's and master's in Electrical Engineering. Miguel was the first recipient of a full scholarship awarded by the UT-Pan American Dance Department. He holds a Masters of Fine Arts in Dance from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. A professional dancer and choreographer, Miguel worked as a dancer with "Espectaculo Jarocho" under the direction of Richard O'Neal, where he was part of the ensemble for more than 5 years. He has worked nationally setting choreographic works for different dance companies such as BYU folk dance ensemble and Living

Legends, Ballet Folklorico Nacional de Milwaukee, and several Rio Grande Valley folklorico groups. He has choreographed special performances throughout the nation for important artists such as Paquita la del Barrio, Vikki Carr, Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán, and Mariachi Sol de México. Under Peña's direction, the UTRGV Ballet Folklórico has received national recognition in the John F. Kennedy for the Performing Arts Center during the American Dance College Festival in 2014, 2016, and 2018.

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**Vaishali Sagar** reigns from Mumbai, India where she holds a masters degree in Indian Folk Dance under the guidance of Guru Rooma Banerjee. Currently she is the director of Kalanjay Dance Academy in Mumbai, India with an enrollment of 900 dance students. She is an expert teacher of traditional Indian folk dances and Bollywood dance styles. She is also representing India at the FIDAF (federation of international dance festival) based in South Korea and has recently won the bronze at the biggest folk dance competition in Asia "THE CHEONAN INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVAL." Her choreography and academy recently won the jury award at the Büyükçekmece Culture and Arts Festival in Turkey. Vaishali has also represented India in various international folk dance festivals based in Italy, Austria, Turkey, Greece, Germany, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, and Belgium.

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**Fili Sagapolutele** has participated in Pacific Island performing arts from a very young age. Raised in the North Shore town of La'ie, Hawaii, Fili was exposed to the rich and diverse cultures represented on the BYU-Hawaii campus and at the Polynesian Cultural Center. He later danced with the Living Legends at BYU-Provo and toured throughout the Polynesian islands, North and South America. A highlight was performing in the Opening Ceremonies for the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics. During his law school studies, Fili continued his dance career working with the youth as a judge for the Sterling Scholar program in the dance division. He and his wife Pania also founded a dance school for youth called the Utah Pacific Islander Dance Company (UPI) and performed at the LDS Conference Center and the BYU Marriott Center for repeat productions of First Night, Tesoros de las Americas, Luz de las Naciones and the Joseph Smith Spectacular. Fili has met with heads of state, ambassadors, and international government, religious and business leaders throughout his dance and professional career. He has traveled throughout Asia, Europe and the Middle East on behalf of the US territories as a former chief counsel and senior policy advisor for the US House of Representatives. Fili is a court-approved Spanish interpreter and is currently a corporate attorney in Salt Lake City, Utah. His lives in Provo with his wife and two children.

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**Greg and Maria Tucker** both began dancing as children and combined have over 76 years of clogging experience. After marrying in 1998, Greg and Maria toured with IFDE, and also competed together, winning 7 National Duet Titles, and over 20 other regional and state titles. They own and direct Rocky Mtn. Express Cloggers in Orem, which they founded in 1998. Their teams have won 31 National titles since that time. Greg and Maria love teaching in the Dance Department at BYU, where they've been since 2007. They also own America On Stage, a dance competition production company.

Their choreography has been seen in the 2002 Olympic Opening Ceremonies, Stadium of Fire, multiple Football half-time shows, and on thousands of stages across the world. Movie and television credits include: "Luck of the Irish" (Disney Channel), "Damsel" (Strophic Productions), "Live to Dance" (CBS), "So You Think You Can Dance" (FOX), the GEICO "clogging" commercial, and many, many more.

Greg and Maria have four children whom they adore, all of which are cloggers.

**Steven Lee Weintraub:** Born on Governor's Island, Bar Mitzvahed in the Bronx, and now living in Philadelphia, Steven Lee Weintraub received his dance training in Manhattan with Alvin Ailey and Erick Hawkins, among others. His career as a teacher of traditional Yiddish dance has placed him in demand at festivals and workshops around the world, including KlezKamp, KlezKanada, and festivals in Krakow, Furth, Paris, London, and Weimar. Steven delights in introducing people to the figures, steps and stylings of the dances that belong to Klezmer music. He has often been called the "Pied Piper of Yiddish Dance"; his years of experience leading and researching Yiddish dance allow him to quickly weave dancers and music together in astonishing ways. Young and old from all backgrounds find it easy to share in the joy of Yiddish dancing.

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**Colleen Nelson West's** Ukrainian mother, instilled in her, a passion and love for Ukrainian dance. Completing a master's degree thesis on Ukrainian dance and culture only fueled the desire to pursue further research and study. Colleen has participated in many Ukrainian dance workshops, festivals and professional organizations both in Ukraine and Canada. She has choreographed over 42 Ukrainian dances for major BYU dance concerts, local and national dance companies, festivals, dance classes, etc. She has also presented research on Ukrainian dance at several national and international professional organizations. Colleen is a retired Associate Professor of Dance from Brigham Young University.

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**Emilee Wright** has been dancing for as long as she can remember. She entered BYU well trained in jazz, ballet, tap and contemporary where she continued her education in those styles and learned new cultural dance forms. After graduating, she never really left BYU as she stayed to teach as adjunct faculty in the Dance Department. Emilee loves learning, choreographing and teaching dances from all different cultures, but specializes in tap, Indian (Bharatanatyam and Bollywood) and Spanish (Flamenco). She has choreographed for productions in various styles for the teams at BYU as well as studios and other productions around the state. She is excited to be involved in her 20th Christmas Around the World!

### **Presents and Presence** — by Emma Rollins (Dramaturg)

One of the first things many people think of when they hear the word “Christmas” is gifts. Gifts and Christmas have been interchangeable for a very long time in our world’s history. But over time, what people think of as gifts has shifted. Each new era or generation defines it differently. There were monetary gifts such as gold, frankincense, and myrrh in the days of Christ, when all things were handcrafted and only the wealthiest of people could have precious ore or spices from distant lands. Or perhaps, during the great wars of the twentieth century, a gift of war bonds was precious when patriotism and the survival of the world made things like toys seem trivial to many. Now, everyone wants the latest iPhone or the newest technology. Throughout our lives, what we want also changes. Gifts shift from toys, games, and candy to technology or clothes—all inconsequential things that provide short-term entertainment. However, all of these things fade and have less impact on our true joy. Joy can really be found in the simple things of life.

Each day, as we move forward in this life, we can appreciate the small gifts we receive: having a nice meal, having somewhere to sleep, or having the clothes we need each day. These gifts are truly taken for granted by many of us, and yet they bring much more into our lives than the flashy, expensive things we wish would bring us happiness. If we could only appreciate these simple gifts we would find much more joy.

Some of these simple gifts are the talents of ourselves and others, service given and received, opportunities for growth, or cultural connections made with those near or far. Cultural dance specifically has provided many with opportunities to associate with people of different backgrounds, and to better connect with them in both song and dance. The light in someone’s eyes that comes when they realize that a barrier you both thought was there is gone—that is a gift. Learning about other cultures, growing to more deeply appreciate the things others have to offer, and learning how to connect with people around—these are gifts that can be given. These are things that can be given without money and by working hard and showing you care.

With these moments in mind, time changes, and we realize the clock will keep ticking—the importance of our relationships becomes ever more obvious. Be it familial relationships, romantic relationships, or everyday friendships, we learn the vitality of love and support in our lives as we grow older. No matter the time period, relationships have proven themselves the ultimate gift and representation of love. We see this with the shepherds coming to learn and know of Christ, we learn of it with each soldier who returns home from overseas, and we hear this in our modern music with titles like “I’ll Be Home for Christmas.” Throughout time, no matter the value of physical things, people have continued to grow in their desire and passion to share love and relationships with others as their ultimate gift. As we have seen throughout history, monetary objects change in value, fall apart, and are easily lost, but relationships endure. They can endure at any point in life or at any level of personal wealth. They will last for as long as you seek them out and cherish them. They will ultimately bring more joy and fulfillment than any other physical gift. When our lives near their end, these are the gifts we will remember most: the people we love and the relationships we have formed.

It is true that some of the most important relationships we have here on earth are in our family. However, the most important one we can strive for is a deeper relationship with Christ. When all else fails, both in monetary things or even earthly relationships, Christ is there to love and support us. His life and our relationship with Him are the most important of all. Other special people come into our

lives but nothing can outlive the blood that Christ shed for us. Not only is our relationship with Christ a gift, but his sacrifice inevitably has become the biggest and brightest gift that no other thing or other person can fulfill in our lives. At the end of the day, Christ's love has been the most divine gift that has ever been granted. To feel and make note of His love, especially during this holiday season, we remember that His gift is the most miraculous and magical one of all.

As you consider the gifts you've given and received this year, think about all of the things you've had the opportunity to share—both monetary or not—and the moments and people we have learned to appreciate. All of these things are good, lifelong gifts. Yet the most important one that often gets forgotten in this life which should always be remembered, especially in this time and season, is Christ. Both our relationship with Him and His life are given to us freely. We merely need to step up and accept the love He has given us and continues to give us throughout our lives. This season, as we give our gifts, appreciate our blessings, and find joy with our loved ones, let us remember that everything we give to others needs to be given in memory of Christ, the ultimate gift.



Scan here to see more about this performance.

# SUMMER DANCE CAMPS

This summer, meet other kids from around the country and "travel the world" with the magic and music of international folk dancing taught by world dance experts! Enjoy fun activities with youth counselors from the BYU International Folk Dance Team, including a dance party, a trip to a water park, and a final dance performance!



[dancecamps.byu.edu](https://dancecamps.byu.edu)

# 2023

**BYU** | DANCE CAMPS

## INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE ENSEMBLE 2023 PERFORMANCES

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- Feb. 10** Dance Performance Theatre, Provo, UT, 7:00 pm
- Feb. 11** Dance Performance Theatre, Provo, UT, 7:00 pm
- Mar. 11** Winterfest, Salt Lake City, UT, 2:00 pm  
Winterfest, Salt Lake City, UT, 7:00 pm
- Mar. 24** Regional Tour
- Mar. 25** Regional Tour

### Mid-Semester Tour—Colorado

- Feb. 14** Grand Junction, CO
- Feb. 15** Montrose, CO
- Feb. 16** Alamosa, CO
- Feb. 17** Colorado Springs, CO
- Feb. 18** Denver, CO

### Summer Tour—International

- June 3-12** Danube Festival, Budapest, Hungary
- June 22-25** Strážnice Festival, Strážnice, Czech Republic

## STAY CONNECTED WITH OUR ALUMNI

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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 reading the archived *The Folk Dancer* club newsletters. Where in the world have the folk dancers toured? Read those past tour histories, country locations, and see those colorful group photos. Our *In Memorium* 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.



<https://byufolkdancealumni.com/>



## 2022–2023 IFDE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

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We thank all who have generously contributed in supporting our program by providing students with scholarship opportunities. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

Mary Bee Jensen Scholarship . . . . .	Elise Glover Braden Duke
Excellence in Folk Arts Scholarship . . . . .	Victoria Rimington Dawson Collins
Viltis Scholarship . . . . .	Brielle Anderson Daniel Owen
Pardoe-Anderson Performance Scholarship . . . . .	Jillian Jarvis
Performance Missionary Award . . . . .	Hanna Gemperline
Cherill Liptak Scholarship . . . . .	Makeila Morgan Brigham Vargha
Harman Award . . . . .	Crozier Fitzgerald McKay Jessop Tori Stone Abby Whipple
Folk Dance Alumni Scholarship . . . . .	Rhen Davis
The Spirit of Folk Dance Scholarship . . . . .	Hannah Kooyman
Colleen West Percussive Footwork Scholarship . . . . .	David Stone
Bridgebuilder Scholarship . . . . .	Remy Comp
Outstanding Mentor Award . . . . .	Kye Davis

If you are interested in providing scholarships for the folk dance program and its students, please contact Damien Bard at 801-422-1193 or visit [GIVE.BYU.EDU/FOLKDANCE](http://GIVE.BYU.EDU/FOLKDANCE)

## CULTURAL DANCE CLASSES AT BYU

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**Dance 135-335:** Tap Dance

**Dance 170-370:** World Dance

**Dance 171-371:** American Clog Dance

**Dance 172:** American Folk Dance Forms

**Dance 173R:** Culture-Specific Dance  
(African Dance)

**Dance 174-374:** Irish Dance

**Dance 192:** Character Dance

**Dance 260:** Introduction to Dance

**Dance 272:** Cultural Dance Forms

**Dance 273-373:** Hungarian Dance

**Dance 175-275:** Polynesian Dance

**Dance 277:** Spanish Dance Tech. 1

**Dance 278:** Ukrainian Dance Tech. 1

**Dance 279:** Indian Dance Tech. 1

**Dance 327R:** Living Legends

**Dance 375:** Dance-A Reflection of Culture

**Dance 376:** Methods of Teaching World Dance

**Dance 377:** World Dance Choreography

**Dance 378R:** Folk Dance Performance

**Dance 478R:** International Folk Dance Ensemble

**Dance 474R:** Percussive Step Styles