



News Release

2019-20 Season

American Folk Dance Ensemble

Performing Arts Management
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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American Folk Dance Ensemble relives history

Taking the folk history of the United States around the world, American Folk Dance Ensemble creates a colorful tapestry of the rich cultural history of the USA. Each performance is a cultural expression, strongly associated with a specific group or people as a reflection of American custom and belief. Their fast-paced, superbly staged program includes Appalachian clogging, Southern waltzes, New England Contra, square dancing, the classic Charleston, and other vibrant, energetic performances.

The group is accompanied by the BYU Mountain Strings band. Comprised of seven talented instrumentalists, who perform with a variety of traditional folk instruments, American Folk Dance Ensemble not only brings the history of the U.S. to the stage through dance but also through weaving toe-tapping music that explores the musical past of the U.S. The ensemble, one of the most sought-after American folk ensembles in the world is coming to (PLACE) on (DATE) at (TIME).



American Folk Dance Ensemble

American Folk Dance Ensemble has attended 34 festivals in 31 countries since 1964. They have been invited back to the Mondial des Cultures de Drummondville in Quebec, Canada more than any other group in the festival's history. In 2015, the ensemble traveled to Europe to perform in three international folk festivals; The International Folklore Festival in Karlovac, Croatia; 'Ciudad de Burgos' International Folkloric Festival in Burgos, Spain; and the Extremadura Festival in Badajoz, Spain. Other prestigious festivals have invited the group back at least five times, including International Folklore Festival in Haifa, Israel; the Festival de Confolens in Confolens, France; and the Billingham International Folklore Festival in Stockton-on-Tees, England.

The ensemble is made up of 37 students, 30 who are dancers and 7 who are musicians. Combined, they form one of the most unique groups of performing arts in the United States. Mountain Strings, the group's folk music ensemble, is featured throughout the concert and adds the rhythm of bluegrass and traditional foot-stomping music. Its traditional approach to music includes the banjo, the fiddle, and other acoustic instruments. Their American musical styles range from American New England and Appalachian folk to bluegrass, Cajun, blues, and country. The performers, all students at Brigham Young University, come from throughout the United States.

"An extraordinary amount of time, talent, and resources go into a production of this size," said former American Folk Dance Ensemble director, Edwin Austin. "The program, however, goes much deeper than pure entertainment. The production is steeped in tradition--an attempt to preserve fragments of the American past." Careful attention is given to every detail of cultural representation in choreography. A spectacular variety of beautiful costumes recreate regional dress from throughout the country. Dancers move to time-honored rhythms and melodies performed by a musical ensemble featuring banjo, mandolin, guitar, fiddle, and other traditional instruments.

American Folk Dance Ensemble originates in the Department of Dance in the college of Fine Arts and Communications at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. BYU has the largest folk dance program of any university in the United States. BYU is among the nation's largest private universities with more than 30,000 students from throughout the U.S. and 100 foreign countries.



Artistic Director

Working behind the scenes of American Folk Dance Ensemble's dazzling showcase of music and dance from America's history is artistic director Jeanette Geslison. Geslison is from Odense, Denmark where she was trained in classical ballet, jazz, and theatre. She attended Brigham Young University and performed with International Folk Dance Ensemble another section of American Folk Dance from 1987-1991, and again from 1993-94. Geslison has strong ties with the group; she has coordinated and directed program ensemble classes and has been a rehearsal specialist with IFDE since 1995.





Upcoming Performances

Hello!Schoten World Dance Festival in Schoten, Belgium

July 6–13, 2018

Eurofolk Festival in Zamość, Poland

July 14–15, 2018

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