
Fact Sheet

FOLK DANCE ENSEMBLE

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Brigham Young University

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- The BYU International Folk Dance Ensemble (IFDE) offers one of the broadest spectrums of folk dance performed by a single group of its kind. Its extensive repertoire includes music and dance from North America, Western and Eastern Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.
- When performing at international festivals, the troupe becomes the American Folk Dance Ensemble (AFDE). Its repertoire then becomes exclusive to the United States as it presents American music and dance.
- Under the artistic direction of Edwin G. Austin, the ensemble has achieved an international reputation of professionalism throughout the United States and in more than 40 countries worldwide. The troupe is one of the most sought-after ensembles to represent American folk culture at international folk festivals.
- The IFDE production team boasts a list of seasoned professionals including Delynne Peay and Jeanette Geslison, world dance specialists and choreographers; Mark Ohran, technical director; Mark Geslison, director of the *Mountain Strings* folk music ensemble; and Colleen West, wardrobe supervisor and costumer designer.
- IFDE features 46 dancers, musicians, and technicians who combine to form one of the most unique groups of performing artists in the United States. The performers, all students of Brigham Young University, study a variety of academic disciplines.
- *Mountain Strings*, IFDE's folk music ensemble under the direction of Mark Geslison, provides the magic of live music for the group. Its traditional approach to music includes the banjo, the fiddle, and other acoustical instruments. Specializing in American, French-Canadian, and Celtic styles of music, the distinct sounds of spoons, bones, and bodhrans add percussive variety.
- In February and March of 2009, the ensemble will visit Montana and Wyoming in preparation for their extended tour of Hong Kong and China, scheduled for May.
- IFDE traveled to Idaho and Washington in February and March of 2008 before embarking on a whirlwind tour of Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine in April and May.
- The ensemble performed at the Opening Ceremonies and at the Olympic Medals Plaza for the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. In 1988, the group also performed in the Seoul, Korea Summer Olympic Games.
- Founded in 1956, BYU's folk dance program is currently the largest and most versatile program of its kind in the United States. The group will soon celebrate its 50th anniversary. Members of IFDE are chosen by audition from among the most skilled performers in a program involving more than 200 students.
- The Folk Dance Ensemble originates in the Department of Dance of the College of Health and Human Performance at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. BYU is one of the nation's largest private universities with an enrollment of approximately 30,000 students from throughout the United States and 120 foreign countries.

Performing Arts
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