



Let's Talk Folk Dance

Membership network email update and musings on local folk, historical, traditional and community dance

Read more at.....Folkdance.nz/members



Hi everyone – there is much to tell you...

It is membership renewal time again – we love having your support and look forward to new members to help fund our projects for the coming year. Please invite new members to join

FDNZ's Mountain Rhythms - April 28-29 - will be a fabulous weekend of dance and music –coming together for a weekend of sharing our favourites with like-minded people; along with some great opportunities to have mini-break with such sights as the world famous Maungatautari predator-free Sanctuary Mountain; the Waikato River trails (free) – great to get alongside our longest awa and either walk of cycle parts of it that cannot be seen by the way; around the area are also the Arapuni Swing Bridge (free) – the longest in the Southern Hemisphere; and the famous Te Waihou Blue Springs and walkway (free). And not least we will have fabulous accommodation, food and music at the Out-in-the-Styx cafe – included in your weekend registration. **Details on our website.**

If you are not grooving to the Mountain Rhythms remember it is '**International Day of Dance**' on Sunday April 29th - how are you and your dance group/ class / friends going to celebrate this and share the fun of dance with your community? Tell us – tell the face book page – let people know – share it around!

In the pipeline...A Contra Dance Day of dance and music workshops with a fun contra dance in the evening....Have you got something coming up? **Fiona**

MEMBERS ARE THINKING ABOUT... Jane Luiten is thinking about calling dances in a gender-free environment. "I fell face-first into a folk dancing hole recently. I was the 'mystery surprise' to help a tangle of contact-improv dancers celebrate a successful week-long retreat, I couldn't help myself. Or, at least, I reacted before thinking. Things began well enough. We warmed up with a genteel Laride – smiles all around – and then ripped into the farandole with the Rae-sourced Galdurigon Nago – high energy whooping laughter now. I got spontaneous applause for my choreographical feat of the Hungarian tune Khade Sukar, and they enjoyed equally the Romanian Hora Pe Sase.

Things came unstuck at the partner dancing. Having organised them into counter-clockwise pairs for the American Promenade, I looked across the circle and spied the unthinkable (in folk dance terms): two men dancing together! Contact improv doesn't have a lot in common with folk dance: but they do share the same female/male ratio. Next minute Jane is prising the men apart, dragging one across the circle to partner a woman, and sending her partner back across the circle to be with the man. It was not a popular move. They did cooperate – but very unwillingly, the derisive catcalls from everyone else shooting home my faux pas. In the end I don't know what made me squirm most: my initial blunder, or the profuse public apology I felt compelled to make on the spot... Don't get me wrong, they were good sorts and moved on with good grace. The photos just back remind me that a very fun time was had by all.
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DANCING...AT THE AUCKLAND FOLK FESTIVAL

At the AFF we are treated to a smorgasbord of cultures and dance styles in the dance hall over the weekend. The very sunny weather did mean the dance hall was a bit like a sauna at times –the ladies 'glowed' and the men 'perspired' and we all had a great time. Each evening there is a fun dance for everyone to join in with – Friday is always the Gaidhealtachd (Celtic Gathering) ceilidh and Saturday this year was hosted by Folk Dance NZ with callers Fiona from Hamilton, Jane from Gisborne and Bronwen from Auckland - supported by the fabulous Tamlin band. Lots of young people dance and have a great time. They don't fuss about who they dance with or what role they take in the dance – see above.

Showcase segments saw Auckland's 'La Bourree' and 'The Joy Dancers' present lovely performance programmes of French dances and Taiwanese / Malaysian/ Philippines dances respectively. Each presentation was followed by a workshop in these styles. Other workshops included those led by FDNZ committee members Ana Maria e Vos (Mexican and Argentinean dances); and Fiona (Eurogypsy – from everywhere!). We had the opportunity to learn Morris Dances; Irish Set dances; Welsh Clogging; Playford Dances; Medieval 'Early Dance; and Scottish Country Dance. You can check it all out in the programme at http://aucklandfolkfestival.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/AFF-2018-Programme_Web.pdf

A stand-out for me at this festival was the contribution from the inaugural Ethno NZ workshop for young musicians 17 – 30 years of age. The concert included tunes we could dance to such as the Estonian flat-footed waltz and Finnish Hambo. If you know someone who enjoys multicultural musicianship in that age group check out their 2019 workshop.

[Ed Always a successful festival dance programme Andy – thanks for your hard work]

Update from your committee: We want your contributions for the first 2018 FDNZ newsletter – stories / photos / reviews / dance information....anything goes as long as it has to do with Folkloric and/or historical dance. Contact the editor@folkdance.nz

**EMAIL
UPDATE
2018 #1**

MEMBERS ARE THINKING ABOUT..... continued.....

...I'm gonna call it a learning. A lesson reinforced at the folk festival in Auckland a week later by UK Caller Pete Grassby making a point of telling the crowd that boys no longer have to dance exclusively with girls... 'Dance with whoever you want'. At a social dance this makes a lot of sense ... people are there to enjoy themselves. And this is 2018.

But it occurs to me it's not such a straightforward issue. Indeed, I have experienced the very opposite reaction: finding himself holding hands with another man in the middle of the early English dance 'Halfe Hannikin' was too much for one conservative-minded [male] punter in Gisborne: he sat out for the rest of the evening. [*Ed: yes I've been chastised for not providing sufficient male partners where there are too many women in a class.*]

What do you do with a dance tradition that is so steeped in gender? Teachers used to a deficit of males often resort to vocabulary about 'male-type persons'. I do. Is dreaming up different labels ('Suns' and 'Moons' for example) any better, or even worse? How do we keep the best of dance tradition – where folks' roles are gender-specific – while embracing a new age of acceptance and inclusiveness?

[*Ed: Here's a challenge members – what have you done in similar situations? Let us know*]

'American Promenade', St Arnaud, Jan 2018. Photo by Ian Ferguson

