

# Lyrids Folkdance Festival— Special Classes and Activities!

By Kathy Sandstrom

Numerous special classes will be offered at the 2025 Lyrids Folk Dance Festival in Pitt Meadows, BC (east of Vancouver, BC) May 9–11. This is in addition to teaching by our featured teachers Željko Jergan, who is presenting Croatian dances, and Joe Kaloyanides Graziosi, who is teaching Greek dances. We are bringing back a music class (drumming!), decorating Croatian hearts, learning a little Croatian beading, and having a very special session celebrating many things Greek, called Treasures from Greece. Please join us at our *fragrance free* festival!

We are conducting a survey to gauge your interest in participating in these classes. Please take a moment to fill it out: <https://forms.gle/x9G5Rcqqg1w2Qcvv7>.

## Licitarsko Srce (Croatian Hearts)

Compiled by Kathy Sandstrom



Nada Dosenovic and Elissa Mladjo will show participants how to decorate these traditional Croatian Hearts, or Licitarsko Srce. Come learn how to do it and take one home as a souvenir! Croatian Hearts are also being incorporated into a welcoming dance at the festival's Saturday party. This is described below.

From the website <https://www.visit-croatia.co.uk/about-croatia/famous-symbols-of-croatia/>: “The custom of gifting licitars as tokens of affection, especially in the form of gingerbread hearts, has deep roots in Croatian culture. A famous symbol of Croatia, especially so from Zagreb (which actually incorporates them into the tourist logo of the city—see the Zagreb tourist office website) and northern Croatia, these heart-shaped biscuits are made from gingerbread or honey dough, painted red, and decorated with colourful icing, little mirrors, and often a little message. Traditionally, they would be given as gifts to a loved one, although nowadays they are a popular souvenir that come in a range of sizes, but don't try and eat the souvenir ones! The licitarsko srce are similar to the Lebkuchen hearts that you find in Germany and Austria, although the red coloring and decoration of the Croatian ones means they are distinct.” Some websites note that licitars are often wrongly referred to as gingerbread, but they don't actually contain any ginger.

From the website <https://www.tasteofadriatic.com/post/licitarstvo-slavica-sweet-heart-of-zagorje>: “A fascinating detail on the gingerbread hearts is a little mirror, which is not just a decoration. It symbolizes the depth of the person's soul giving the heart, making this gift even more special. Giving a gingerbread heart, with which a young man expresses his affection and love to a young woman, is deeply rooted in Croatian traditional culture.”

Wikipedia contributes: “Licitars are nowadays considered traditional Croatian and Slovenian souvenirs, and can be found in all Croatian and Slovenian airports, as well as in

many tourist gift shops. They are also used as Christmas tree decorations, wedding gifts for guests, business gifts and to other ornamental purposes.” It has been announced by the Croatian minister of Culture Božo Biškupić that next year licitars will be on the UNESCO list of culture goods.

## Croatian Beading

By Greta Kos and Kathy Sandstrom



This year, we are offering a special Croatian beading class where participants will be given the choice of making a beaded choker or beading a wider ribbon, which could be used to cover a head band. Leading us in this art will be Maria Aničić. Following is a short biography on Maria, provided by Greta Kos. Greta is a leading authority on Croatian costuming in Vancouver, WA.

Photo courtesy of Greta Kos Maria joined Tamburaski Orkestar Kardinal Stepinac (TOKS) in 1990. There she met her future husband, Zvonimir, and eventually, they had three children. After raising these children, who also became performing members of TOKS, she rejoined the group and became Costume Director. Her duties in this capacity consisted of maintaining and restoring over 10 complete sets of male and female costumes from different parts of Croatia. She also oversaw the making of new pieces. This was done with particular attention to technique and authenticity. In addition to different methods of research and study, Maria also attended costume-making seminars in Croatia so as to further her knowledge and skills.

Maria has stated she finds the most rewarding part of sharing her knowledge with members of the ensemble is when those individuals realize they had talents and abilities they never knew they had.

TOKS is a large Croatian performing ensemble that will be performing at the Lyrids Folk Dance Festival Saturday evening party. TOKS will also provide the music for the Welcoming Dance—Dance of Hearts, which is explained later in this article. This dance will occur right after the TOKS performance to kick off the evening party. To hear their music now, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtGcTe2we1U&t=83s>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3DqMONQSJY>, and <https://www.youtube.com/@tamburicaorchestrakardinal515>.

## Drumming Class

By Fred Graves



Fred Graves has been dancing to and playing Balkan and international folk-dance music with various Seattle groups (Balkanarama, The Cociks, Zakuska, Dave & the Dalmatians) for nearly 30 years. He divides his time between singing, wind instruments, and percussion. At Lyrids, he plans to teach basic Balkan rhythms for

doumbek and tupan that you can play for the singalong right after the drum workshop! So, bring either or both of those drums. Class will be Sunday. 10:45–11:45 a.m., downstairs.

### Treasures from Greece

By Kathy Sandstrom



Photo by Kathy Sandstrom

Immerse yourself in a potpourri of Greek lore. Learn unusual and interesting Greek facts. Find out how ancient Greece influenced the modern world. Learn about the Greek alphabet. Write your name with gold and black metallic pens in Greek lettering. Create a wearable Greek flag for your lapel. Make an urn bookmark. Take home some Greek recipes to try your hand at Greek cooking. There may be other projects, as well.

We'll have a very special show-and-tell by Erika Gerson of treasures she's brought back from Greece, including musical instruments, jewelry, and some art work. Margarita Zantza, a local Greek, will be bringing her beautiful costume, and some embroidery she did as a girl/young woman. Between Erika and Margarita, they will bring some weavings from Metsovo, a small and charming Vlach village that sits high in the Pindus Mountains in Northern Greece. A travel writer named Alice noted, "The village is characterized by its quaint stone houses and signature red roofs." Learn a little about the Vlach culture, such as here they speak a local dialect of Vlach language.

Kathy Sandstrom will also bring a few pieces of jewelry and help moderate, with a few stories of her own. We might teach you a few fun words to say, like epharisto and parakalo! Join us on Saturday downstairs, 2:45–4 p.m., to enjoy these beautiful and delightful treasures.

### Welcoming Dance Game—Dance of Hearts (Ples Srca)

By Nada Dosenovic

A member of our festival committee, who was born and lived in Croatia for over 30 years, learned and experienced this party game in the '70s and '80s while dancing in villages around the city Virovitica. It is the capital of the Slavonija-Podravina region, situated close to the Hungarian border and Drava River.

The parties were called Zabava and always had live music. The bands played a mix of folk and popular music.

The Dance of Hearts game ("Ples Srca") was used as a raffle ticket fundraiser and participants bought one heart. Hearts were numbered in pairs: two number 1s, two number 2s, etc. Music played and numbers were called for people to join the dance floor to start dancing.

When a number was called, two people with that number put up their hand and looked for the other person to start dancing. When all numbers were called, everyone danced for a short time. Then numbers were called again. People whose number was called left the dance floor. The last couple standing was the winner and got a prize. At Zabava, that was usually a 24-pack of beer.

At Lyrids, the organizers have given a numbered heart on a lanyard to each participant in their festival package. On

Saturday after the performances, we will open the evening party by playing the Dance of Hearts. We will modify the party dance from the original couple dance to a multi-formation dance. Couples may dance as a couple, form a line, or make a circle with other couples. If you can't find your matching number to dance with when it is called, just go out and dance with the circle or line. The winning couple will get a nice prize.



## MILESTONES

- Condolences to the family and friends of Veronica Mratinich, who passed away December 22, 2024 from pancreatic cancer. You can read her obituary at [www.emmickfunerals.com/obituary/Veronica-Mratinich](http://www.emmickfunerals.com/obituary/Veronica-Mratinich).
- Deepest condolences to long-time NFDI member Kitty Pelkan on the loss of her husband, Karl, on January 21. Karl was a NFDI member, an alumnus of Radost, Bokreta, and Kisbetyarok, an MC of Northwest Folklife Balkan dances, an organizer of Ti Ti Tábor Hungarian Dance Camp, and more. He will be greatly missed.
- Skandia member and former NFDI member Kathi Ploeger passed away on February 15. Condolences to her husband, Don Meyer, her family, and her many friends.

Dance on  
the Bay  
MARCH 29  
2025



North Bayside Grange  
67577 E. Bay Rd.  
North Bend, Oregon

A day of folk dance workshops with

**Roo Lester**  
CHICAGO  
Basque, Scandi,  
and more dances

**Gigi Jensen**  
SPOKANE  
Latin American  
folk dances

AM workshop with Gigi and Roo: \$15  
PM workshop with Gigi and Roo: \$15 } Or \$40  
Evening dance party: \$15 } all day

Potluck lunch · Basque culture hour with Roo Lester  
Argentine tango demo with Gigi and Warren Jensen  
Evening eclectic folk dance party with live and recorded music  
Out-of-towners: Make a weekend of it! Home stays available!

Register at [StacyRoseDance.com](http://StacyRoseDance.com)