

Time to Promote Youth Fund Scholarships to Our Youth

By Diane Vadnais

This is the time of year Northwest Folk Dancers Inc. (NFDI) begins to receive scholarship applications for youth to attend Stockton Folk Dance Camp. From a designated youth fund, NFDI helps send young dancers to this week-long camp. Lately, the students who have applied have been from Süssesfüsse, a dance troupe run by Heidi Vorst in Portland. However, the Youth Fund is open to young dancers from middle school through early college. If you have a young dancer who has been dancing with your group, please tell them of this opportunity. They do not need to be NFDI members. Information is on the NFDI website (www.nwfolkdancers.org). As members of NFDI, we can be very proud of what we have accomplished. NFDI has helped many young dancers and offered an example of how to support the next generation of dancers.

Our assistance to young dancers is recognized throughout the U.S. Heidi Vorst was given honorary membership in the NFO for her work with youth, plus her work with seniors. For many years, dancers who have attended Stockton Folk Dance Camp have become familiar with these kids. They are an asset to the camp, and part of our dance future. If you are a long-time NFDI member, you have read many thank-you articles in the NFDI. Reading them always causes me to smile.

Consider going yourself! Speaking of Stockton dance camp, this might be a great year for you to attend. Ed Austin will be teaching classic dances; Sonia Dion and Cristian Florescu, dances of Romania; Roo Lester, Spanish Basque dances; Gabriel Fontera, Spanish couple dances; Miroslav "Bata" Marcetic, dances of Serbia; Stacy Rose will call squares, contras, and mixers; and Richard Schmidt will teach couple dances of Poland. More information is available on the Stockton website: www.stocktonfolkdancecamp.org.

Pay it forward and please, please, please, if you are able, donate to the Youth Fund. This is a very positive way to support folk dance and help ensure the future of folk dance. Send your donation with your NFDI renewal, or send a check to Northwest Folk Dancers, P.O. Box 333, Lynnwood, WA 98046-0333. You must mark the donation Youth Fund. Youth fund money and NFDI money are never commingled. Remember, NFDI is organized under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. tax code. Talk to your accountant about a tax deduction. Thank you very much.



New Members

A big welcome to:

Peggy & Dave Mueller, Seattle, WA

Jana Schroeder, Seattle, WA

Željko Jergan at Lyrids Folk Dance Festival

By Kathy Sandstrom



Source: Željko's Website Photo Gallery Photos.

researcher, and performer. His website is www.zeljkojergan.com.

Born in Varaždin, Croatia, he started folk dancing as a child in different folk dance groups in Varaždin as an activity during the winter months. When he was seven years old, his father took him to see the professional dance group LADO Folk Ensemble. Željko told his father he wanted to do that, as well. Needless to say, his father didn't believe one could make a good living dancing.

When he went to Zagreb to study to become an architect, a friend asked him to audition for LADO. The first time Željko auditioned, he heard a singing class rehearsal. He turned around and went home. He returned one week later, auditioned, was accepted, and eventually dropped his studies, becoming a professional dancer.

Željko was a leading performer with Croatian Folk Ensemble LADO for 12 years and traveled the world with LADO. He also performed with the Zagreb National Ballet and some modern dance companies.

Željko is a graduate of the Varaždin School of Music, Čakovec School of Architecture, and worked under the tutelage of Milica Glavočić Pininsky, a consultant to the Zagreb Ethnographic Museum.

Since coming to the USA, Željko has created over 450 original choreographies for 70 different amateur, semi-professional, and professional ensembles, including Les Sortileges, Brigham Young University, Seattle's Radost Folk Ensemble, and the Duquesne University Tamburitzans.

Željko is working with the international folk dance community, where he is in popular demand for his depth and style in teaching Croatian folk dancing. He has traveled extensively, both domestically and abroad, including folk dance seminars and workshops in the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, and Taiwan.

Željko has made a significant contribution to the Canadian-Croatian folklore community, where he has been sought year after year to create original new choreographies for both the Eastern and Western Canadian-Croatian Folklore Festivals.

He also serves as Artistic Director for Kraljica Jelena Folklore Ensemble, Kitchener, Ontario, and Croatian Village Folklore Ensemble, Hamilton, Ontario, where he continually strives to elevate the level of authenticity and presentation of those ensembles. He is also the artistic director for the Folklore Ensemble Hrvatski Tanac and Kumovi Adult Ensemble of Pittsburgh, and St. Anthony's Folklore Ensemble of Los Angeles.

Dances Željko has taught include: Aj lipo ti je, Ajd na lijevo, Ajnzerica (Enzerica), Al je lepo, Baranjsko kolo (Kolo u dvi strane), Čižme moje, Čumurka-Sarajčica, Cupanica, Dere, Derite se čižme moje, Došla sam vam japa dimo, Drmeš



Photo by Pat Keough at Salt Spring Island, Canada

iz Marijanaca, Goricani, Hopa dina, Igrajte mi, Igre Bosanske Krajine, Jabuke - Marice, Ki su Dečki Crleneši, Kola iz Slavonije, Kopriva - Carska kasa, Moj dragane, Moldovan, Na dvi strane, Nabrala, Papučica, Pokupski Svatovski drmeš, Presjekač, Raca Plava, Rokoko, Rukavice-Todore (Valpovačka kolo), Čkaljarsko kolo, Šokačko kolo, Sukačko kolo, Stinjačko kolo, Sviraj zlatno, Treskavac, V Goričani, Valpovačka kolo, and Zavrzlama.

As a performer with LADO, he met his wife, Cindy, when she came to Zagreb from the USA wanting to dance with LADO for a year. Cindy was the first dancer outside Croatia to perform with LADO. They fell in love, got married in Varaždin in a civil ceremony, and also in the

USA in a church ceremony. In the end, Cindy wanted to stay in the USA and they stayed. That was in 1986. Željko and Cindy live in Allison Park, Pennsylvania. They have a son and daughter. This year they celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary.

Here is a testimonial regarding Željko's tremendous talent: "Željko Jergan has done more than any other master teacher to spread the wealth and richness of Croatian dance and culture among the international folk dance community. He has a unique ability to share not only the dance but the context for the dance while inspiring us to respect the rich culture behind it and making it fun! He has taught for my dance groups, the Cafe Danssa Balkan Dancers and L.I.F.E. Balkan Dancers, many times and did an amazing job at the many folk dance camps where he has taught, including the L.I.F.E. Dance and Music Camp, where he brought the Jerry Grcevic Orchestra and Skitnice to play live for his classes and gave us a whole new appreciation for Croatian music. I have organized workshop tours for him and seen him teach in many different settings, always with wonderful response. He is respected and loved by our folk dance community and has linked us to the Croatian community in many ways and is continuously sought after for workshops, camps, and festivals across the United States and around the world."—*Sherry Cochran (Los Angeles Balkan dance teacher and director of L.I.F.E. Dance and Music Camp).*

In recognition and appreciation of Croatian culture, Lyrids Folk Dance Festival will provide different craft workshops to all attendees, including a Croatian beading class with Maria Anicic, and decorating of Licitar Hearts (Licitarsko Srce) by Nada Dosenovic and Elissa Mladjo. The latter has been recognized as Croatian intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2010. Watch your NFDI magazine for an article on these special classes and more next month.

As a special fun part, our Saturday party will start with Dance of Hearts (Ples Srca), a traditional dance at Zabava (Dance Party) in some parts of Croatia, primarily the Slavonia/Podravina region.

We wholeheartedly invite you to attend the Lyrids Folk Dance Festival in Pitt Meadows (east of Vancouver), May 9–11, 2025 and to experience the magic of Željko's teaching, try some crafts, enjoy wonderful food, and meet old and new friends.

Come also to learn Greek dances from our other featured festival teacher, Joe Kaloyanides Graziosi. A story on Joe was featured in last month's NFDI.

We strive to be conscientious of allergies and other issues, so please come fragrance-free to the festival.

Registration opens in January 2025, www.lyridsfolkdancefestival.org. Dobro dosli!

