

# Dance on down to The Pomegranates Festival

**The Pomegranates Festival takes place in April and will celebrate Scottish traditional dance and traditional dance practised by cultural migrant communities across Scotland.**

Taking place at the Scottish Storytelling Centre and various venues across Edinburgh from 25-30 April 2024 it offers a platform when new dance commissions and residencies can be displayed accompanied by live music, poetry, and art and invites audiences to take part in ceilidhs, workshops (both in-person and livestreamed), tours, and talks about traditional dance from Scotland and around the world.

## **Some of the highlights include:**

- A family day with a ceilidh for all led by Caroline Brockbank of CeilidhKids and a matinee showcase by traditional dance artists who are in residence at primary schools across Edinburgh and the Lothians, and Bulgarian and Ukrainian language schools in the city.
- Two specially-commissioned tours of Edinburgh's Old and New Town's dance history, looking at the underrecognised female dance teachers of the past, with writer and storyteller Donald Smith and dance historian Alena Shmakova
- Elegies weaving dance theatre, spoken word and live

music is a dance adaptation of the poetry book *Elegies for the Dead in Cyrenaica* (1948) by Hamish Henderson(1919-2002), a soldier-poet, singer-songwriter and scholar-folk revivalist of Scotland.

- Choreographer in residence Jonzi D will be working with 20 Edinburgh-based traditional dancers who will perform alongside him on Monday 29 April and showcase their work as part of the festival's International Dance Day celebrations.
- Two exhibitions – ***Dance Around the World (3-30 April)*** a display of traditional dance books and artefacts from Scotland and beyond, at Edinburgh's Central Library accompanied by craft maker-led hands-on workshops; and ***Vengefully Changed Allegiance*** by Alison Harm **(23-30 April)** which looks at the role of tartan in traditional dance.

Vanessa Boyd, Interim Head of Dance at Creative Scotland said: "The upcoming Pomegranates Festival in the capital promises a vibrant gathering of artists uniting to celebrate and present a diverse tapestry of Scottish traditional dance alongside traditional dance from migrant communities and various cultures. What makes this festival truly exceptional is the breadth of the programming provided by Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland which will enable many more people the opportunity to experience and engage with a strong mix of traditional dance from Scotland and around the world."

Wendy Timmons, Festival Producer and Senior Lecturer in Dance Science and Education at Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh said: "The University is delighted to be working in partnership with Traditional Dance Forum Scotland on this year's Pomegranates Festival. The festival is an important part of our year-round work with schools and communities in Edinburgh, and key for our academic studies of different styles of dancing currently practised in

Scotland. Scottish Dancing has its place in the festival, but it is the dances from all the different cultures living in Scotland, and the interconnections these create, that make this festival unique. Pomegranates is grounded in diversity and our role at the University is to ensure it reaches the broadest audiences possible through our livestreaming and academic work. I couldn't be more thrilled with the line-up in this year's programme and am looking forward to an absolutely fantastic weekend of dance."

Iliyana Nedkova, Festival Producer and Curator of the Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland said: "It is so satisfying to see that the pomegranate ruby seeds of traditional dance that we planted for the first time in spring 2022, once again blossom into Scotland's springtime festival for world trad dance. As a new festival born in times of uncertainty, displacement and border restrictions, we were inspired by a poem by Ian McMillan that captured the zeitgeist. Little did we know that Ian would become our first poet-in-residence. Three years on, we remain committed to this duet of poetry and pragmatism. I believe we are the only festival home for the diverse dance forms of the different migrant communities across Scotland from Indonesia and Ireland to Costa Rica and the Congo who all share the primary ingredient of world dance – the triple step."

The Pomegranates Festival will run from Friday 25 April to Tuesday 30 April 2024 and is Scotland's annual festival of international traditional dance. Initiated and produced by Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland it is presented in partnership with Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland, Moray House School of Education and Sport, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh City Libraries, Dance Base and the Scottish Storytelling Centre.

For tickets and more information visit <https://linktr.ee/pomegranatesfest>



5/3/2024 Picture Alan Simpson Marianella Desanti (Mexican Dance of the Death dance costume) Tony Chen and his two children Yi Zhen Chen aged 4 and Cheng Sue Wang 9 (Chinese Classical folk dance) Gabriela Shokolarova (Bulgarian folk dance costume) Oksana Saiiapina and Ivan Saiapin aged 13 (Ukrainian folk dance) Abby-May Shearer (Highland Dance) Mare Tralla (Estonia/Scotland)





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