

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY
STALLER
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

PRESENTS



SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2026

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The National Dance Company of Ireland

RHYTHM OF THE DANCE

PROGRAM

ACT I

Rhythm of the Dance

The First Drop

Finding Your Feet

Easkie's Legacy

Mná na hÉireann

Actin' Through Goat

The Exhibition

Breaking the Grip

The Gathering

ACT II

New Dawn

Foreign Soil

The Beat of the Bodhrán

From the Ashes

Brigid's Flame

Hup!

An Irish Tango

Beyond the Horizon

We Rise

The Last Drop

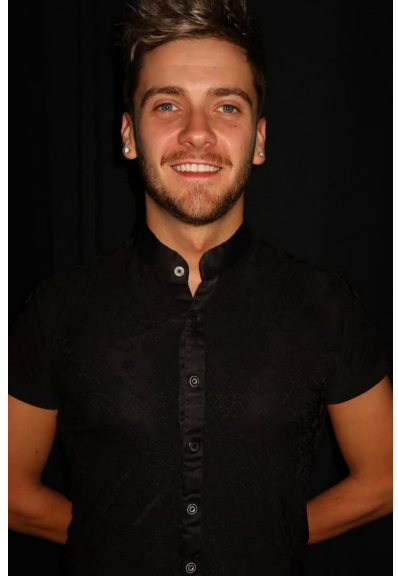
Parade of Champions

Encore

PRINCIPAL DANCERS



JESSICA CARTWRIGHT
PRINCIPAL FEMALE DANCER



CURTIS LONG
PRINCIPAL MALE DANCER



REBECCA BYRNE
PRINCIPAL FEMALE DANCER



EOGHAN WELDON
PRINCIPAL MALE DANCER

RHYTHM OF THE DANCE

ABOUT

Rhythm of the Dance marks a new era in Irish entertainment, featuring a wealth of Irish talent, including World and Irish champion dancers, some of the finest traditional musicians and world-renowned singers. Combining traditional dance and music with the most up to date stage technology, this two-hour dance and music extravaganza takes audiences on an exhilarating, exciting, energy-packed trip through the ages. Internationally regarded as one of the most popular and busiest Irish step dance shows in the world.

Initially created for a three week tour of the United States in 1998, Rhythm of the Dance has achieved great critical acclaim as it consistently tours internationally. Thus far, the production has been seen by over 7 million people in 50 countries.

This wonderful show continues to evolve thanks to a creative team that constantly strives for perfection. After 20 years of showcasing the very best in Irish dance to the world, Rhythm of the Dance has undergone a process of renewal, reinvigorating the choreography and music to create an even more spectacular performance.

BIOS

Rebecca Byrne
Principal Female Dancer

Rebecca began Irish dancing at the age of 4 at the Beldance Academy in Dublin. Having won numerous titles throughout her competitive career, she moved on to work as a dancer professionally. Rebecca has performed in many corporate events across Ireland and the UK, joining the cast of *Rhythm of the Dance* in 2024. She has also trained extensively at the Billie Barry Stage School and studied multiple genres of dance including ballet, tap, jazz and musical theatre and has appeared in many theatrical, film and TV productions, most recently appearing in the film *Young Washington*. Rebecca is extremely honoured and proud to be a member of the cast of *Rhythm of the Dance* and is delighted to be performing with this incredible show.

Jessica Cartwright
Principal Female Dancer

One of the leading female stars of the Irish Dancing show circuit, Jessica went to her first

Irish Dance class at the age of 4 in Antrim, Northern Ireland and was immediately hooked. She spent 7 years at the Castletown School of Irish Dancing where she started dancing the festival style of Irish dance and later moved to Royal Tara Dance Academy, where she still teaches and trains the next generation of dancers. Jessica's strong work ethic and relentless dedication to her dancing helped her competitive career take off and serves as the platform for her enviable achievements.

Over the course of her competitive career, Jessica has won multiple titles including CRDM 2x British National Championships, 3x All Ireland Championship, 2x London Championships, 3x Dublin Championships. Jessica is also CRDM 2x World Champion.

Following her competitive career, Jessica followed her lifelong dream to perform as a professional dancer in shows around the world.

Jessica has been dancing with Rhythm of the Dance for over 5 years now and has been principal lead dancer for 3 years now.

Her style, elegance, and powerful dancing has entertained and captivated audiences across Europe and beyond, defined by an intensity and passion that is second to none. In between her busy schedule, Jessica has also completed the first part of her official teaching qualifications and she continues to be an inspiration to all of the younger dancers hoping to follow in her footsteps.

Jessica is also a dance captain with Rhythm of the Dance.

Curtis Long
Principal Male Dancer

Curtis comes from Carrickfergus in Northern Ireland and was born into a family who have over 55 years experience teaching Irish Dance. With this family lineage, it was inevitable Curtis would become an Irish Dancer himself.

At the age of 5 Curtis began dancing with Gavin and Seaneen Doherty in Belfast.

He competed in many Feiseanna competitions, consistently being placed in the top 3. At the age of only 7, Curtis claimed his first title of many at the North American Championships. During a successful 14 years of competing, Curtis won 2 American Nationals, 2 British Nationals, Great Britain, All Ireland, Ulsters, Irish Nationals and European Championship Titles and since the age of 9 has been Top 5 in the world, finishing off his competitive career achieving a ranking of 2nd place in the CLRG World Championships twice.

Curtis' greatest wish was to become a professional principal lead dancer so, following his success in competitive Irish Dance, he

joined *Rhythm of the Dance* and, after 5 years of dedication and hard work, was named Principal Lead Dancer. Serving as Principal Lead Dancer for 3 years now, he has performed all over the world.

Curtis is now a fully Qualified Irish Dance Teacher with CRDM and has joined his family teaching in The Royal Tara Dance Academy.

With his impressive skills, Curtis Long has become a role model for aspiring Irish dancers worldwide. Curtis is also a dance captain with *Rhythm of the Dance*.

Eoghan Weldon
Principal Male Dancer

Eoghan Weldon started dancing at six years of age in County Louth, Ireland, for Scoil Rince Cosceol under the teachings of Colin and Sarah Ryan, competing in Irish Dance Competitions at the highest level for fourteen years. In 2023, he moved from competition to the performance side of Irish Dance. He has been a member of the *Rhythm of the Dance* since September 2023, touring internationally, on three continents and in over 50 countries. Eoghan began performing at 9 years old in Drama Groups in his locality. Since 2012, he has performed with Dundalk Musical Society in their Pantomimes and Musicals. Eoghan is excited to be a part of this new era of *Rhythm of the Dance* and step into this role of principal male dancer.

James Greenann
Choreographer

From Co. Cavan, Greenann is a passionate Irish dancer and sports massage therapist. As a child, James discovered his love for the art of Irish Dance in Dundalk where he was taught by the acclaimed Mona Rodaigh. He was fortunate enough to enjoy a successful competitive career having won every major title including the coveted World Championships. This sparked James' love for the stage and steered his progression as a dancer into the professional arena.

James spent his professional career expanding his artistry by working on various productions and alongside admired choreographers. The most prestigious of these being Riverdance where he danced as the principal dancer for 12 years in venues such as Radio City Music Hall, New York and The 3 Arena, Dublin. Others include *Heartbeat of Home* [The West End, London], Eiru dance company [with Breandan de Gallai] and *Prodijig's Footstorm* [with Alan Kenefic].

In recent years, James has explored his own creative ideologies through various platforms. These include *Celtic Gold* in 2019 which he choreographed and directed, and his own corporate dance company KLIX. In addition to dance, James' passion for movement has expanded into other disciplines as he is also a fully

qualified and experienced Sports and Myoskeletal Massage Therapist. He works primarily with dancers in helping them move pain-free, recover from injury and live long, happy and healthy careers. His practice is called Corrective Manual Therapy, which is based in Dublin.

James is honoured to share his creative expertise with *Rhythm of the Dance* and continue to entertain audiences worldwide through the Irish culture.

Belinda Murphy
Choreographer & Director

In her career as a dancer, Belinda has appeared in many musicals and stage shows in Ireland and abroad.

Stage direction and choreography credits include: "Sleeping Beauty" - 3 arena Dublin. "Messiah XXI" starring Gladys Knight and Chaka Khan. Numerous pantomimes in the Olympia Theatre Dublin, UCH Limerick, and Cork Opera House. "The Wiremen" - Gaiety Theatre. "Celtic Thunder" touring the USA and Australia from 2007 to 2019.

Belinda worked as assistant choreographer and dancer in the original "Riverdance" at the Eurovision song contest in 1994 and subsequently at the royal command performance at the London Palladium.

Her choreography and movement direction can be seen on the big and small screen in productions including: "The Tudors", "Camelot", "Love Hate", "Leap Year", "Albert Nobbs", "Love Rosie", "Secret Scripture", "Sing Street", "The Man Who Invented Christmas", "Vikings", "Valhalla", "The Winx Saga".

Most recently, Belinda has completed work on feature films including: "The Last Duel", "Irish Wish", "The Pope's Exorcist", "Dancer Casting Director UK & Ireland for Disney's "Disenchanted".

Belinda has just completed her 5th year directing the UK Tour of "Menopause the Musical 2".

Shane Moran
Musical Director

Shane is a multi-instrumentalist and vocalist from Mayo, Ireland. He began playing music when he was 10 years old and competed successfully nationally on both the Banjo and Guitar in his teenage years and soon pursued a professional career in Irish Music. Shane began working with *Rhythm of the Dance* on Banjo and Guitar in 2013 for their 15th Year Anniversary World Tour. In 2016 he was delighted to attain the position as Musical Director for the show. Shane has toured extensively throughout more than 20 countries all over the world with *Rhythm of the Dance* and has also been featured on two PBS specials with the show.

The Dancers

Rhythm of the Dance blends the principle forms of Irish dance Step, Set, Old Style Step and Sean-nós.

Rhythm of the Dance's dancers are among the most accomplished Irish dancers in the world. Over the years the show has been proud to boast numerous national, international and World Champion dancers. Their dedication to the art form of Irish dance is clearly evident on stage during production. With their graceful movement and disciplined control it is often said that "they make it look easy". What is not evident is the off stage commitment required to reach the pinnacle of Irish dance demanded of the Rhythm of the Dance dancers. With the rigours of touring and the endless hours of rehearsals, practice, working and reworking routines, the dancers of Rhythm of the Dance form lifelong friendships and get to know each other's dance styles and timing. It is this unique knowledge that enables the dancers and choreography team to deliver the driving rhythmic performance which has been enjoyed live by millions worldwide.

Kieran Cavanagh

Producer, In Memoriam

The show's producer, Kieran Cavanagh has for many years been a promoter of international renown and was the recipient of the prestigious CMA award for "International Promoter of the Year 1995" in Nashville, TN. His roster of concert successes, too numerous to list in full here include sell out tours with Kenny Rogers, Willie Nelson, James Brown, Van Morrison, Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson, Trisha Yearwood, Mary Chapin Carpenter, the late Tammy Wynette, etc. For some thirty years, he has promoted sell-out concerts in Ireland, for Ireland's truly International star Daniel O'Donnell, for whom he had the honour of taking over the full International management of in 2014.

Kieran expanded his productions, promotions, and agency under the heading KCP. With "Rhythm of the Dance", Kieran fulfilled a long held ambition in the late '90's to produce a superb dance spectacular. Having invested a vast amount of time and effort into market research he finally came up with the blueprint to create and bring to fruition "Rhythm of the Dance" in 1999 and judging by reaction to the shows continual worldwide touring and 7 million in ticket sales, it appears he got the formula just right. KCP book and route tours for International artists on a worldwide basis and Kieran prided himself on his company being one of the very few Irish based companies who manage tours.

Producer: Kieran Cavanagh, In Memoriam

Choreographer: James Greenan

Wardrobe Manager: Klaudia Ostrega

Set Design: Evgeniy Gurenko

Production: Prosound Ltd.

Production Administrator: Annemarie Carey

Sound /Production: Grzegorz Kozlowski

Tour Manager: Ken Cavanagh

Lighting Technician: Jakub Kowalewski

Lighting Designer: Wojciech Was

Merchandising Manager: PJR Merchandising

Tour Accountants: BH & Company

Legal and Business: Barry Lyons & Co., Dublin.

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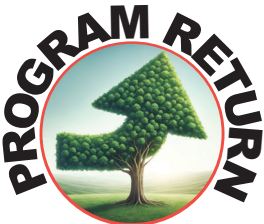
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You're always welcome to keep your program, but if you plan to throw it out, please be sure to place it in the program return boxes after the show.

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