

KlezmerQuerque 2015 Dance

Yiddish Dancemaster Steve Weintraub returns to Klezmerquerque!



Steve Weintraub is a teacher, choreographer, and performer of Jewish dance, particularly Yiddish dance, the dance to klezmer music.

Born on Governor's Island, Bar Mitzvahed in the Bronx, and living now in Philadelphia, Steven Lee Weintraub received his dance training in Manhattan with Alvin Ailey and Erick Hawkins, among others. He is in international demand as a teacher of traditional Yiddish dance at festivals and workshops including Klezkamp, Klezkanada, and festivals in Krakow, Furth, Paris and London to name a few.

Steven delights in introducing people to the figures, steps and stylings of the dances that belong to Klezmer music. He has often been called the "Pied Piper of Yiddish Dance"; his years of experience leading and researching Yiddish dance allow him to quickly weave dancers and music together in astonishing ways. Young and old, from all backgrounds, find it easy to share in the joy of Yiddish dancing.

From Steve's web site – his comments and feelings about Yiddish dance:

What is Yiddish Dance? Yiddish dance is a modern name for what would once have just been called "Jewish dancing" in Ashkenazy communities. It's the way European and American Jews danced before the creation and dissemination of Israeli dance. The dance is more concerned with patterns in space and personal style than elaborate footwork. It has some elements in common with square dancing, but also borrows from other European folk styles, particularly Russian, Polish, and Romanian.

Is Yiddish dance hard? No! Much of what I do is just like follow-the-leader, but based on well researched traditional dance forms. These forms have evolved to the point where people resonate with the dancing on a deep emotional level.

Will young people enjoy it? People, particularly young people, will go where the fun is. When their investment of time and attention gets a big fun payback, they become very enthusiastic participants.

Dance as a fast track to creating bonds of relationship:

I've seen it over and over – a crowd of people, some friends, some strangers, slightly nervous but filled with a guarded anticipation. The music begins, some simple follow-the-leader activities, and in a very short time people are grinning, their eyes are sparkling, and they are really seeing each other in a warm way.

Whether you are Jewish or not, there is something in the DNA of Yiddish dance and the klezmer music that accompanies it that has a natural resonance for all sorts of people. From children to seniors, there is a way of taking part and celebrating. In no time at all, people have a radically enjoyable shared experience that they will remember and talk about for a long time. I've spent over two decades creating this kind of experience for people from every background in the US, Canada and throughout Europe.