



The History of Festival Dance

Festival Dance and Performing Arts Association (Festival Dance) has an amazing history of accomplishments and service in the arts, which includes starting Moscow's first dance school, launching Idaho's first professional ballet company, and establishment of the region's only professional performance dance series.

In 1970, Carl and Jeanette Allyn Petrick, moved to Moscow to pursue degrees at the University of Idaho, and opened a small dance school, the Moscow Dance Theatre, on East Third St. in downtown Moscow. They immediately began producing elaborate dance productions with their students, and it was the great success of these productions that inspired a dream to start a professional ballet company, Ballet Folk of Moscow (Ballet Folk).

Ballet Folk was established in June 1972 with the support from the Idaho Commission on the Arts, and in 1974, became Company in Residence at the University of Idaho. In addition to company rehearsals, Ballet Folk also taught dance classes for the community.

The company began touring in Idaho, then nationally, and later was renamed the American Festival Ballet. They performed in 32 states and represented Idaho at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. in 1976. The company moved to Boise in the 1980s to increase financial support, and a school was opened there in addition to the Festival Dance Academy in Moscow, which remains on the campus of the University of Idaho.

In 1989, the Boise and Moscow portions of the organization separated, with the company rebranding as Ballet Idaho and remaining in Boise, while Festival Dance & Performing Arts Association was established in Moscow to continue serving the Inland Northwest area with dance performances, education, and outreach. As part of our continuing residency with the University of Idaho, Festival Dance provides an instructor to teach three credits of university-level dance courses and offers access to cultural programs and community-wide instruction in dance.

In 1990, Festival Dance established the Great Performances Series, bringing three to four outstanding touring dance and music companies to this region each year, including talented artists and companies from throughout the U.S. and from countries on six continents.

Festival Dance is managed by a core staff and a board of directors whose members represent constituencies in Washington and Idaho, including educators, businesspeople, community volunteers, and area tribes.

Operating with the mission of "Bringing Arts to the People and People to the Arts", Festival Dance reaches thousands of people annually with year-round programs including the Festival Dance Academy, the Great Performances Series, Discover Dance, YouthReach, summer workshops, and other exciting and diverse arts programs that enrich our communities and inspire and educate people of all ages through the region.