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MUSIC AND DANCE ABOUND AT HOLIDAY FOLK FAIR *INTERNATIONAL*

MILWAUKEE, WI — Entertainers that span the globe will play a significant role in the 73rd annual Holiday Folk Fair *International*, America's premiere multi-cultural festival, to be held Fri., Nov. 18 – Sun., Nov. 20, 2016, at the State Fair Park Exposition Center in West Allis, Wis.

The All Nations Theater will serve as the venue for the opening and closing ceremonies along with dancing by more than 25 ethnic groups, including groups representing Bulgarian, Chinese, Italian, Latvian, Norwegian, Turkish, and Ukrainian.

This year's guest group participating in Folk Fair is from Schlitz, Germany. The "Schlitzerländer Trachten- und Volkstanzkreis" was founded in 1927 and seeks to sustain the tradition and culture of the region through the preservation of traditional dances, songs, and the authentic costumes. Since the 1960s, the group frequently participates in folklore festivals in many parts of the world. The ensemble performs traditional routines originated in Schlitz plus folk dances from throughout Germany, consisting of different dancing suites, quadrille dances, and traditional dances in two lines accompanied by musicians playing accordion, double-bass, and guitar. The handmade costumes worn by the performers date back to the 1840s.

The Tanzhaus (Music Pavilion) will once again enable attendees to dance and sing along to a variety of musical styles. Returning to Folk Fair in 2016 is Don Grzanna, who will be performing French, Italian, Irish, and German music, including polkas. Joining Grzanna in the Tanzhaus will be Ocean Rush, performing "Jawaiian" music, a combination of Hawaiian and reggae; the Bob Breuer Polka Band; the Elegant Gypsies, with a repertoire that includes ancient Celtic through modern Mediterranean music and timeless American standards; the Orkestar Sloboda, specializing in Serbian and Balkan music; and Prazna Flasa, featuring Balkan music.

In addition, a vast array of ethnic groups will dance in the Tanzhaus throughout Folk Fair, including Croatian, Filipino, Mid East, Polish, Pomeranian, and Slovak.

The Young People's Showcase on Sun., Nov. 20, presented by The Salvation Army of Milwaukee County, will offer performances at 11:15 a.m. and 12:45 a.m., with the dancing talent of 20 young ethnic groups, including Bavarian, Donauschwaben, Greek, Mexican, and Polish. Youth will also perform throughout the weekend on the International Stage, including those representing the African American, Filipino, Mexican, Serbian St. Sava, and Ukrainian cultural groups.

The Coffee House provides those in attendance the opportunity to enjoy a cup of coffee, espresso, or tea and baked goods, such as Italian biscotti or a Scottish scone, while listening to talented musicians from throughout the world. Making their Folk Fair debuts on the Coffee House stage will be Rise Up, Gan Ainn (Celtic), a Serbian Choir, and Papi Nakena Hawaiian.

Groups returning to the Coffee House include Brian Bauman (American Folk), Elegant Gypsies (Celtic and Mediterranean), Ethnictricity ((multi ethnic), Garlic Mustard Pickers (Gaelic), Greg Herriges (World/Eclectic), Lekspel (Scandinavian), Michelangelo, Peasants Abroad (Turkish Fusion), Pommersche Spaldeel (Pomeranian).

A program of the International Institute of Wisconsin, Holiday Folk Fair *International* celebrates the cultural heritage of the people living in southeastern Wisconsin. This year's theme, "Celebrate the Culture of Water," will allow Fair-goers the opportunity to learn the ways in which water and its symbolism is incorporated into the music, food, dance, arts, and crafts of Holiday Folk Fair.

Special attractions in 2016 include invited international performers and artisans, including the Schlitzlerländer Trachten- und Volkstanzkreis musical group from Schlitz, Germany, a World Heritage Japanese photographic exhibit, the Sisters Cities International 2016 Young Artist and Authors Showcase, The United States Department of State "*Faces of Diplomacy*" exhibit, the Artisan corner sponsored by Debra Stefl and Katherine Kral, Financial Advisors with Morgan Stanley, the Kohl's Color Wheels display, the Wisconsin Woodturners, and a bonsai exhibit.

The three-day event features the All Nations Theater with traditional music and dance, the World Café offering traditional dishes, the International Stage where young people perform their ethnic dances, Heritage Lane, presented by Weather Tight Corporation, with unique traditions and customs through interactive exhibits, the International Bazaar, sponsored by Leaf Filter, where cultural artifacts create a unique shopping experience, and the Callen Construction Chef's Stage featuring local chefs preparing traditional cuisine.

Hours on Fri., Nov. 18 are 2 p.m. – 10 p.m.; 10 a.m. – 10 p.m. on Sat., Nov. 19; and 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. on Sun., Nov. 20.

Advance tickets will be sold for \$10 each, with family four-packs for \$36, and available for purchase on-line at www.folkfair.org. Admission at the gate will be \$12 for adults; \$8 for children ages 6 to 12; children under the age of five will be admitted at no charge. Those 62 and over will be admitted for \$10, and all military personnel with a military ID card will be admitted free.

For more information on the 2016 Holiday Folk Fair *International*, visit www.folkfair.org or call the International Institute of Wisconsin at 414-225-6225.

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