

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

November 13, 2017

## **MUSIC AND DANCE ABOUND AT HOLIDAY FOLK FAIR *INTERNATIONAL***

**MILWAUKEE, WI** - Entertainers that span the globe will play a significant role in the 74<sup>th</sup> annual Holiday Folk Fair *International*, America's premiere multi-cultural festival, to be held Fri., Nov. 17 – Sun., Nov. 19, 2017, at the State Fair Park Exposition Center in West Allis, Wis.

The All Nations Theater, sponsored by Fields Auto Group, will serve as the venue for the opening and closing ceremonies along with dancing by more than 30 ethnic groups, including groups representing Bavarian, Donauschwaben, Finnish, Irish, Mexican, Pomeranian, and Turkish.

This year's guest groups participating in Folk Fair are from the Bahamas and Indonesia. The music to be played by the Bahamian entertainers is known as Rake 'n' Scrape, a traditional music featuring the common handsaw, accordion, and goatskin drum.

The Tanzhaus (Music Pavilion), presented by Leaf Filter, will once again enable attendees to dance and sing along to a variety of musical styles. New in 2017 will be Derek Byrne and Paddygrass, an Irish, bluegrass, and gospel band. Byrne, a native of Ireland, toured the world with Riverdance as a singer and musician for six years. He settled in Milwaukee in 2001 and has played a prominent role in the Irish music scene since. His biggest musical influences are Paul Brady, Pete Seeger, and Luke Kelly.

Returning to the Tanzhaus in 2017 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 African American, Czech-Slovak, Greek, Nepalese, and the Polish.

The Young People's Showcase on Sun., Nov. 19, 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 19 young ethnic groups, including Chinese, Filipino, Latvian, and Slovak. Youth will also perform throughout the weekend on the International Stage, including those representing the Croatian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Serbian, and Ukrainian cultural groups.

The Coffee House, sponsored by Renewal by Andersen, provides those in attendance the opportunity to enjoy a cup of coffee 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 the St. Nikola Serbian Choir, the Hawaiian Civics Club, the Monarcas Mariachi Band, and Abandin All Hope.

Groups returning to the Coffee House include Brian Bauman (American Folk), Elegant Gypsies (Celtic and Mediterranean), Ethnicricity ((multi ethnic), Garlic Mustard Pickers (Gaelic), Michelangelo, Peasants Abroad (Turkish Fusion), and 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 Welcome," will allow Fair-goers the opportunity to learn the traditions and symbolism of cultures as it relates to welcoming individuals and how it is incorporated into music, food, dance, arts, and crafts.

Special attractions in 2017 include invited international performers and artisans, including those from the Bahamas and Indonesia; the "Images of Liberty" the "Capture the Spirit of Ramadan," and the Thaddeus Kościuszko photographic exhibits; the Artisan Corner sponsored by Debra Stefl, featuring guest artists from Alaska and Uzbekistan; the Dirty Kettle Native American interactive display; the Kohl's Color Wheels display; the Wisconsin Woodturners; a bonsai exhibit; and the annual Naturalization Ceremony on Fri., Nov. 17, at 2:30 p.m.

In addition to the music performance stages, the three-day event features the World Café offering traditional dishes; Heritage Lane sponsored by Weather Tight, with unique traditions and customs through interactive exhibits; the International Bazaar sponsored by Bath Fitter, where cultural artifacts create a unique shopping experience; and the Callen Construction Chef's Stage featuring local chefs preparing traditional cuisine, including youth representatives of the American Culinary Federation Chefs of Milwaukee, Inc.

Hours on Fri., Nov. 17 are 2 p.m. – 10 p.m.; 10 a.m. – 10 p.m. on Sat., Nov. 18; and 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. on Sun., Nov. 19.

Advance tickets will be sold for \$10 each, with family four-packs for \$36, and available for purchase on-line at [www.folkfair.org](http://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. Attendees that bring a new and unwrapped children's book for The Salvation Army of Milwaukee County's Toy Shop will receive \$2 off the regular adult admission price of \$12 on the purchase of up to

four regular adult admission tickets. 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 2017 Holiday Folk Fair *International*,  
visit [www.folkfair.org](http://www.folkfair.org) or call the International Institute of Wisconsin at 414-225-6225.

# # # # #