

Two Unusual SCD Events



Evening dance, Győr

The Link between Budapest and Vienna

Although Vienna is just 243 kilometres away from Budapest, connected as they are by the River Danube, in my mind Vienna is still a 'foreign city' outside our own country's boundaries. Historically it was on the other side of the Iron Curtain for us Hungarians, but now we are starting to realise that it is really not so far away.

Scottish dancing has done a lot to bring people from these two capital cities closer. The Budapest Scottish Dance Club is always looking for new opportunities for SCD and so we were very enthusiastic when, at the initiative of Bexi Wepner (from RSCDS Vienna Branch), two RSCDS certified teachers, Bexi and Gabor Turi (from Budapest), agreed to teach at a joint dance weekend on 26–28 September 2014 in Győr, Hungary, and we were able to get Silke Grosholz to fly to Győr from Germany to play for the dancing. The town of Győr is situated at an equal distance from Vienna and Budapest. It was highly appropriate too that a joint activity should be held in 2014, exactly 25 years after the very first floods of people from the Eastern bloc started to pour over the Hungarian border into Austria, the first break in the Iron Curtain.

So, with financial support from the Susi Mayr Fund of the International Branch, we were able to hold the first Vienna-Budapest SCD Weekend, with 35 Hungarian, 11 Austrian and 2 British participants. As the name suggests, we would like to make such joint weekends a tradition, including dancers from the groups in Salzburg, Bratislava and Prague.

How do we benefit from such a workshop? It is amazing how much better people can dance and pay attention when they feel they have to show how prepared they are. Getting to know another teaching style and learning new dances are a plus as well. Such a weekend also offers a bigger choice of partners, more interesting formations, and a nice atmosphere in the evenings when you can sit down for a chat or just have a good laugh. The more the merrier, as they say!

All this is why we are looking forward to our next international event, the SCD Weekend and Ball, to be held on 24–26 April 2015 in Budapest, with Janet Johnston as teacher and David and Scott Cunningham as musicians. Of course, dancers from Vienna will be there and we will again meet our extended family. In 2013 our ball had over 70 participants from abroad, but this year we are expecting to host more than 100 dancers from 12 countries.

Agnes Borbely, Chairman of the Budapest Club



Austro-Hungarian cake

The International Lermontov 200 Festival

2014 marked the 200th anniversary of the birth of the great Russian poet Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov, a descendant of the Scottish Learmonth clan. The International Lermontov 200 Festival celebrated the work of the poet and his Scottish roots, especially in the person of his legendary antecedent Thomas 'the Rhymer' Learmonth. Events took place in Russia, Scotland and throughout the world, all patronised by representatives of the family.



Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov

During the Festival's Scottish part in October, a bicentenary tartan 'Lermontov 200' designed by the Lermontov family was presented at the Scottish Parliament. On 3 October in the Town Square, Earston (Ercildoune) – birthplace of Thomas the Rhymer – a monument to Mikhail Lermontov was unveiled, created by a Russian sculptor of Scottish stone and Russian bronze. Cultural events, concerts and exhibitions also took place in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Moffat.

Celebratory events continued in several Russian cities, including a St. Petersburg section organised by the 'Trip to Skye' Scottish Dance Club and the RSCDS Moscow Branch, supported by the Lermontov family and the Gaelic Scientific Society. Events included lectures, a storytelling session, sightseeing tours of the places connected with the poet's life in the city, and a series of SCD workshops.

The Festival reached its climax on 18 and 19 October with the Dance Weekend and Lermontov's Ball, with over 70 participants coming from twelve cities, including those as far afield as Minsk and Vitebsk (Belarus). The classes with Patrick Chamoin of Paris and live music by Sofia Petkevich made the weekend a real dancing holiday. After two SCD classes on Saturday the participants had a chance to take a sightseeing walk in a surprisingly sunny St. Petersburg. In the evening the Blue Ball Room was ready to welcome beautifully dressed dancers for the Lermontov's Anniversary Ball. The marvellous piano and violin music played by White Heather Band musicians Anna Kovaleva and Maria Karachevskaya (Moscow), MCing by Patrick Chamoin and Yulia Tkacheva, and old and new friends dancing together created a wonderful atmosphere of joy and happiness which lasted much longer than just the four hours of the Ball.



SCD class with teacher Patrick Chamoin

The organisers were impressed to see so many dancers travelling such a long distance and to realise how highly motivated they were. On behalf of the Organising Committee, I pass on thanks and appreciation to the participants from Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Yaroslavl, Vologda, Perm, Voronezh, Cherepovets, Kostroma, Saint-Petersburg, Minsk, and Vitebsk. We look forward to seeing you all again as well as meeting new friends from other clubs and schools dancing SCD in Russia and abroad.

And of course we thank Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov for such a wonderful occasion to dance together!

Maria Tsvetoukhina