

THE
Celebration
Singers



SHALL WE



DANCE?

EXPLORING THE MUSIC YOU CAN DANCE TO!

FRIDAY, MAY 16

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SUGGESTED DONATION \$10 PER PERSON

**This project is supported by a grant from the Abilene Cultural Affairs Council,
HeARTS for the ARTS, and the Abilene Arts Alliance**

THE CELEBRATION SINGERS PRESENTS

“SHALL WE DANCE?”

INTRODUCTION

Be Our Guest Ashman, Menken

WALTZ

Shall We Dance Rodgers & Hammerstein

Twila Nowell, Soloist

Richard & Sofia Marianowski, Guest Dancers

I Could Have Danced All Night Lerner & Lowe

Lily Lemmons, Guest Soloist

Richard & Sofia Marianowski, Guest Dancers

JAZZ AND SWING

Me and My Shadow Rose & Dreyer

Mixed-Up Group

Lila Griffith & Kaitlyn Olson, Guest Dancers

Chattanooga Choo Choo Gordon & Warren

The Wise Guys

Liz Cooke, Soloist

Alexander's Ragtime Band Berlin

I Got Rhythm Gershwin & Gershwin

Mixed-Up Group

Skyler Kinney, Guest Dancer

Cheek to Cheek Berlin

The Celebration Ladies

Nicole Wiedemann, Soloist

COUNTRY

Country Style Burke & Van Heusen
MC, Jill D'Entremont, Shelby Stahlke,
& Nicole Wiedemann, Dancers

Mountain Music Owen

Take Me Home, Country Roads Danoff, Nivert, Denver
Liz Cooke, Soloist
Barry & Jean Triche, Dancers

Deep in the Heart of Texas Hershey & Swander
With The Celebration Kids

CROWD PLEASERS

60's Chicks arr. Althouse
The Celebration Ladies

Rock Around the Clock Freedman & De Knight
The Wise Guys & The Celebration Kids

Y.M.C.A. Morali, Belolo, Willis
Celebration Dancers & Kids

PATRIOTIC

You Raise Me Up Lovland & Graham
Andy Ladyman, Soloist

Our America arr. Higgins

Armed Forces – The Pride of America! arr. Gilpin
Morgan Shaner, ASL

Battle Hymn of the Republic Howe & Steffe

PERSONNEL

Director, Accompanist Lora Lynn Christensen
Emcee Dr. Larry McGraw
Guest Conductor Alan Jones
Drummer Jimmie Roberts

THE CELEBRATION SINGERS

Jan Berny	Twila Nowell
Jamie Breed	Mike Randolph
Kerrin Browning	Robin Roberts
MC	Christianne Robertson
Liz Cooke	Nora Beth Scholfield
Lora Cottle	Jennifer Shaner
Jill D'Entremont	Aaron Shipp
Paul Davis	Shelly Smith
Faye Dodson	Shelby Ray Stahlke
Melvin Dudley	David Swearingen
Gerald Gilkey	Karen Swearingen
Diane Jamison	Janis Thompson
Kathie Justice	Barry Triche
Becky Kirkpatrick	Jean Triche
Andy Ladyman	Al Watkins
Sharon Mize	Nicole Wiedemann

GUEST DANCERS

Richard & Sofia Marianowski
Lila Griffith
Skyler Kinney
Kaitlin Olson

GUEST SOLOIST

Lily Lemmons

Johnson & Johnson

THE WISE GUYS

Paul Davis
Melvin Dudley
Gerald Gilkey
Andy Ladyman
Mike Randolph
Aaron Shipp
David Swearingen
Barry Triche
Al Watkins

CELEBRATION LADIES

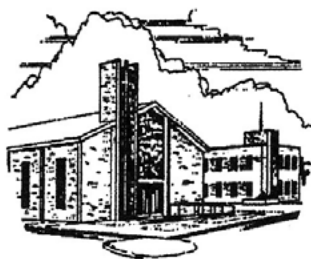
Jamie Breed
Jill D'Entremont
Faye Dodson
Diane Jamison
Robin Roberts
Janis Thompson

MIXED-UP GROUP

Jamie Breed
Lora Cottle
Andy Ladyman
Twila Nowell
Robin Roberts
Aaron Shipp
David Swearingen
Karen Swearingen
Barry Triche
Jean Triche

CELEBRATION KIDS

Zachary Gage
Elric Justice
Henry Meeks
Leah Shaner
Madelyn Wiedemann



Belmont Baptist Church

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Lora Lynn Christensen

Our Director & Accompanist

Lora Lynn Christensen is a Nationally Certified Teacher of Music and owner of an independent piano studio of more than 30 years in Abilene. She has been an adjunct faculty member at McMurry University since 2011, teaching piano and accompanying vocal students. She is the Past State President of Texas Federation of Music Clubs, has served on the board of Opera in the Ozarks and is a member of the Abilene Music Teachers Association (Texas Music Teachers Association and Music Teachers National Association) and the Harmony Club (TFMC). She is also a founding member of the Abilene Opera Association.



Lora Lynn currently serves on the boards of Harmony Family Services and the Celebration Singers. She is a member of the Kiwanis Club of Abilene, is an SAI patroness, and is the pianist at St. James United Methodist Church. Fun facts: she also plays the accordion, the McMurry Carillon and the Kiwanis Club of Abilene historic McMurry calliope.

Lora Lynn has served as the accompanist for the Celebration Singers since 1999, and she became the Director of the Celebration Singers in the fall of 2024.

A Note from our Director

Welcome to "Shall We Dance?"

Have you ever had an earworm? A song (or worse, a snippet of a song) that goes through your head over and over? Well, that happens to musicians all the time.

Psychiatrists say it can be a sign of insanity, but I think it is just a sign of being immersed in music.

Well, late last summer I got the song Shall We Dance? stuck in my head. Now, I could never really dance and I certainly can't dance now, but it seemed like a fun theme for Celebration Singers spring show.

We invite you to sing along with us, dance along with us and enjoy many of the aspects of our daily lives that are affected by dance music. It is a wonderful human trait and you can't be unhappy while dancing.

Many thanks to everyone on the stage in front of you and a few behind the scenes. Every member of Celebration Singers contributes in more than one way and it is appreciated. Every member is a functioning member of the Abilene community with actual jobs (or retired from actual jobs) who also love music enough to make a delightful performance happen.

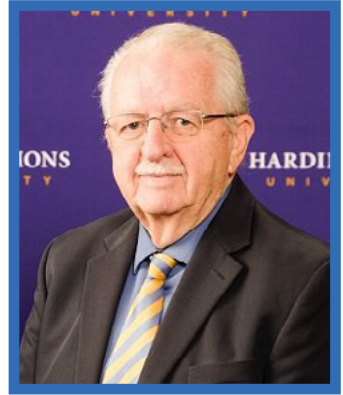
If you love to sing, please consider joining us in the fall!

Lora Lynn Christensen, NCTM
Director of Celebration Singers

Dr. Larry McGraw

Our Master of Ceremonies

Dr. Larry McGraw serves as the Associate Dean of the Logsdon Seminary at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas. As professor of Bible, Dr. McGraw has taught at Hardin-Simmons for 42 years. As a preacher/teacher, he has spoken at numerous churches, Bible Conferences, and special events in several states. He has written numerous articles for publications, including the "Bible Illustrator" and "Southwest Journal of Theology". On the local level, he teaches adult Sunday school classes and has written teacher guides for Baptist Way Press in connection with the Texas Baptist General Convention. He previously published devotional books on Isaiah and Matthew in "The Bible Says" series. He has been a radio personality in Abilene and the public address announcer for HSU home football, basketball, and volleyball games.



Married for 51 years, he and his wife Sandy have 2 adult sons, two wonderful daughters-in-law, and four fabulous grandchildren: Braylen, Ainsley, Reed, and Jaxon. Dr. McGraw was honored by HSU with the first "Golden Microphone" award for his days announcing sporting events. He has been our Celebration Singers Master of Ceremonies for 20 years where his wit and wisdom have charmed performers and patrons for many successful shows.

Alan Jones

Guest Conductor



A native of Albany, Texas, Alan Jones graduated from Hardin-Simmons University (1990) and Logsdon Seminary (HSU, 2014). A Music Educator for 23 years, Alan currently teaches K-5 Music at Dyess Elementary, has taught in an adjunct capacity at McMurry University, and is the Choir Director at St. James UMC. Alan is married to Shari, and they have one son and daughter-in-law, Griffin and Maddie.

HARMONY CLUB

**A Federated Music Club, part of Texas Federation of Music Clubs
and National Federation of Music Clubs**

CLUB PROJECTS

- Instrument Donation and Repair Fund
- Awards to music students for summer camps
- Donations to local symphony and choral groups
- Opportunities to perform as soloist or in ensembles

Accepting new members: please see Lora Lynn Christensen, Diane Jamison, Nora Beth Scholfield, Aaron Shipp, Karen Swearingen, or Twila Nowell—Harmony Club members who also belong to Celebration Singers

Music Notes: A Brief History of Dance

Dance has been a part of human culture for millennia, evolving alongside societies across the globe. Its origins can be traced back to prehistoric times, where it likely emerged as a form of ritual, communication, or celebration.

Archaeological evidence, like cave paintings from 9,000 years ago in India and Egypt, depicts figures in motion, suggesting dance was already significant in early human life. In ancient civilizations, dance took on structured roles: it was tied to religious ceremonies honoring gods, was featured in theater and mythology, blending storytelling with spiritual expression. Meanwhile, tribal dances in Africa and the Americas focused on community, marking events like harvests or rites of passage.

The Middle Ages in Europe saw dance split between folk traditions—like circle dances among peasants—and the formal court dances of the elite, such as the Pavane in the Renaissance (14th–16th centuries). This split led to several offshoots.

Dances of the Elite

Ballroom dancing's origins can be traced back to the European courts of the Renaissance period, around the 16th century, where formalized dances like the Pavane and Galliard were performed by the nobility. These early dances were often stately and processional, reflecting the social hierarchies of the time.

By the 17th and 18th centuries, dances such as the Minuet became popular in royal courts, particularly in France under Louis XIV, who was an avid dancer and established dance academies. This era saw dancing evolve into a refined art form, with choreography and etiquette playing significant

roles. Ballet emerged in French and Italian courts, professionalizing dance with figures like Louis XIV, who founded the Paris Opera Ballet in 1661. This set the stage for classical ballet's global spread.

Dances of the Common Man

Square dancing has its roots in European folk traditions that were brought to North America by settlers in the 17th and 18th centuries. It evolved from a blend of dances like the English country dance, French quadrilles, and Irish jigs, which were popular among rural communities. These dances typically involved groups of four couples arranged in a square, moving through a series of figures guided by a caller—an innovation that distinguished square dancing from its European predecessors.

By the 19th century, square dancing became a staple of social life in rural America, particularly in the Appalachian region and the Midwest, where it was performed at barn raisings, weddings, and community gatherings. Its lively, communal nature made it well-suited to frontier life. The dance retained traditional steps like the “do-si-do” and “promenade,” often accompanied by fiddles and banjos playing folk tunes.

The 19th century also marked a turning point with the rise of the Waltz, which emerged from folk dances in Austria and Germany. Initially considered scandalous due to its close partner hold, the Waltz gained widespread acceptance and became a cornerstone of ballroom dancing. This period also saw the introduction of other partner dances like the Polka and Mazurka, fueled by the social gatherings of the growing middle class during the Industrial Revolution.

The 20th century revolutionized dance breaking from rigid forms to emphasize emotion and natural movement. Ballroom dancing exploded in popularity, especially in the United States and Britain. The influence of American jazz and Latin American rhythms fueled by cultural shifts and media like film, led to the development of dances like the Foxtrot, Tango, Rumba, Cha-Cha, Quickstep, Samba, and Jive. Dance halls and competitions flourished. Social dances—think swing in the 1930s or disco in the 1970s—reflected popular music and youth culture.

Today, dance is a global fusion, from hip-hop born in 1970s New York to K-pop choreography dominating the 21st century. It's both art and expression, shaped by technology, migration, and innovation, yet still rooted in that ancient human instinct to move.

Special Thanks

Music Notes Liz Cooke
Producer, Stage Design Nicole Wiedemann
Costumes..... Karen Swearingen
Choreography MC, Lora Cottle, Jill D'Entremont
Production Assistant/Publicity David Swearingen
Art Director, Social Media Jill D'Entremont
Music Library... Christianne Robertson, Jean Triche, Barry Triche

**Thank you to McMurry University
& Abilene Christian University**

A very special thanks to our retired board members

Betty Ann Blackburn, Dee Compere, John Compere,
Gene Linder, Merri Roberts, Larry Todsén and all those who
have served on the Celebration Singers Board since 1997!



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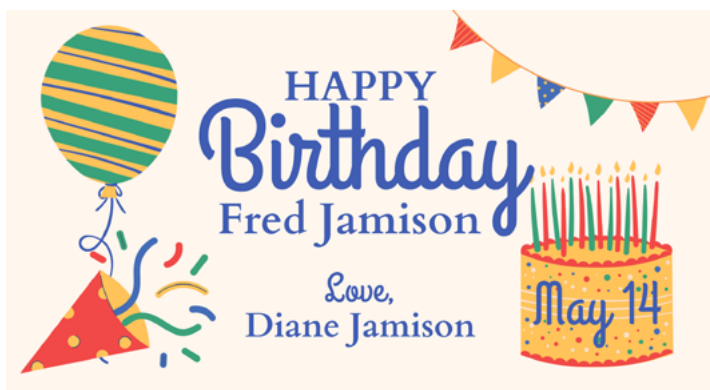
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International**

*Changing Hearts
Transforming Lives
Impacting the World*

KAIROS INSIDE

Our Mission

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