

# ISTVÁN SZABÓ

## Dance Workshops

### ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Folk dancer **István Szabó** grew up in the town of Békéscsaba, close to the Romanian border, in the Southeastern corner of Hungary. Composed of three major ethnic groups -- Hungarian, Slovakian and Romanian -- the community did not focus on individual ethnic lineage but rather emphasized their shared history and folk art. This successful "melting pot" background greatly influenced his attitude that people from different nations and cultures can interact constructively.

István has been dancing since he was ten years old when he joined an after-school dance program that led him to train for an amateur performing group. By age fourteen, he was inspired to become a professional folk dancer and folklorist. He successfully auditioned for the Hungarian Ballet Institute in Budapest, specializing in folklore curriculum. After graduating from the Institute at eighteen, he was accepted into the Army Folkdance Ensemble (Honved), which allows dancers to fulfill their Hungarian military service (after basic training) by performing and teaching dance. During this tour of duty he performed throughout Asia and Europe and taught regularly in Hungarian schools.

He graduated from the prestigious Hungarian Ballet Academy with a degree in folk dances of Hungary and Romania. He has danced professionally with the Hungarian State folk Ensemble and toured more than 15 countries. Since moving to the United States in 1991, István has directed the Karpatok Hungarian Folk Ensemble, co-directed the AMAN Folk Ensemble and taught both children and adults. His repertoire for student residencies goes beyond his knowledge of Hungarian dance to include such dances as the South African Gumboot Dance and the Appalachian Big Circle dance.

### ABOUT THE GROUP:

*Aman International Folk Ensemble* worked for over 30 years to bring performances and workshops of world dance and music to audiences all over the world. Following the closure of the company, five talented members of this internationally known group have created *Aman Dance Educators*, and are taking Aman's mission to a new level. All seasoned professionals, the artists include Dawn Dyson, Kristen Smiarowsky, Shyamala Moorty, Rosina Didyk and István Szabó.



### ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS:

*The Aman Dance Educators* help students, teachers and others learn dances from Europe, Asia, Africa and North America. With each workshop, participants also expand their knowledge of geography, history and culture, as well as improve their coordination, creativity and rhythm skills. Cooperation and teamwork drive these fascinating and engaging workshops. All lessons are carefully crafted to be grade-appropriate and to correspond to the California Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Standards. The work also makes connections to standards in History/Social Science, Foreign Language, math, English/Language Arts and Physical Education. These Aman educators work with schools to create a custom dance experience for students and can select workshops covering a variety of topics, including the following.

#### **Dance and Community** (all grade levels):

In this residency, students use their bodies as active tools to learn about different cultures and to understand their own communities in new ways. Participants experience traditional folk dances from a variety of cultures and engage in creative activities that teach them how to create their own unique movement vocabulary that can culminate in a new community dance.

#### **Legends through Dance** (K-3rd grades):

Sessions in this residency address the Language Arts Standards by using dance as the medium to tell stories. Featuring examples of Native American and Polynesian dances, these workshops allow students to explore the basic elements of dance, learn how to communicate or tell a story through gestures, and bring a legend to life through movement.

#### **Dances of California/USA** (4th and 5th grades):

These workshops make curriculum connections to the 4th and 5th grade social studies standards by using line, square and circle dances from early United States history. The sessions can also include dances related to Fort Ross, California Ranchos and the Gold Rush.

### **BEFORE THE WORKSHOP:**

- Please have the students wear nametags for the workshop. It saves time if they are made beforehand!
- Review the importance of listening and observing. Ask the students what it means to be a good listener. What does it mean to be a good observer? Why is it important in daily life? Why is it important when the artist is here?
- Please encourage the students to dress appropriately – in clothes that allow them to move comfortably.

### **AFTER THE WORKSHOP:**

- Review the dances learned in the workshop. Discuss what the students remember about the specific culture in which the dance originated and ideas connected to the theme, steps or music. What parts of the workshop did the students like best? What did they learn about dance? What did they learn about themselves?
- Review students' ideas about folk dance, underscoring the idea that it is a universal social form of expression for many cultures of the world. Discuss the importance of dancing together with others. Where can they use this skill in their lives? (e.g. focus, working cooperatively with others, listening to directions, remembering sequences, etc.)
- Research some other folk dances and learn them as a class.