

Sheila Graziano

Traditional & Original Step Dance



Step Dancing

*Performances and Interactive Programs
for School and Community Groups*





Portraits of Sheila Graziano
on the cover and at right:
Michael Hough

SHEILA GRAZIANO DISCOVERED HER PASSION FOR DANCE AT AN EARLY AGE. ROOTED IN TEN YEARS OF TAP LESSONS, HER ENTHUSIASM GREW WITH THE DISCOVERY OF APPALACHIAN CLOGGING AND OTHER FORMS OF TRADITIONAL DANCE.

Smitten with the art, Sheila Graziano devotes much of her time to developing skills and knowledge of traditional dance, including English, Irish, Scottish, and Canadian dance steps. She combines dances with music from different areas... "Sometimes it just clicks!"

Ms. Graziano has been a member of The Crosstown Cloggers and Crow's Feet dance groups, and performed as a soloist with The Raisin Pickers stringband for many years. She teaches private lessons and is the dance instructor and choreographer for two performing high school groups in Washtenaw County. Sheila's goal of keeping dance traditions alive by "passing it on" has been furthered by a variety of opportunities including:

- An invitation from Dr. Tony Barrand to travel to Vermont, supported by the Wheatland Music Organization, to learn dances choreographed in the 1930s by the Marleys, a family of English-Irish immigrants.
- An Innovative Arts Grant to teach third graders traditional American step dancing garnered by Ms. Andrea Moon, Department Head of Elementary Vocal Music, Troy School District.
- A collaboration with Michigan's state troubadour Neil Woodward—"Matter and Ghost"—to bring the past into the present to perpetuate dances for the future.
- Artistic Director of the Saline Celtic Festival since 1996.

"Step dancers strive for rhythmic beats and the ability to capture different styles. Sheila Graziano is an exceptional dancer who does both of those things."

—Dr. Tony Barrand, English folklorist, singer and dancer



And so it began... Sheila (right) and sister in the 60s.

Keeping Traditions Alive

LIKE THE CULTURAL TREASURE IT IS, STEP DANCE HAS A RICH HISTORY AND TRADITION. TRADITIONAL DANCE PROVIDES AN ENJOYABLE MEANS, FOR PERFORMERS AND AUDIENCES ALIKE, OF EXPLORING OUR UNIQUE AMERICAN HERITAGE.

Sheila Graziano's workshops and performances provide an active link in the chain of keeping traditional dancing alive. Similarities and differences between various forms of dance are expertly demonstrated and discussed. Cultural influences are emphasized while students learn to dance.

The school programs are adaptable to many grade levels. Sheila welcomes opportunities to work with teachers and community groups to include specific areas of focus in the presentation. American and multi-cultural history, dance and music studies are particularly enhanced by these performance/workshops.

Grant funding opportunities may be available to assist school and community organizations in presenting these unique dance programs. Please inquire about single performances or residencies.

"No, Mommy, we DON'T want to watch Shirley Temple and Bojangles dance again!"

—Sheila's kids

"You should be proud of those kids—and yourself. You are a marvelously gifted teacher."

—Bonnie Rideout, Scottish fiddler

PERFORMANCE VENUES

- Wheatland Music Festival
- Ann Arbor Folk Festival
- Thumbfest
- Indiana Fiddlers Gathering
- Riverfolk Festival
- Evert Dance Day
- Summerfolk (*Owen Sound, Ontario*)
- Numerous gazebos, libraries, community concerts—even town halls in England!

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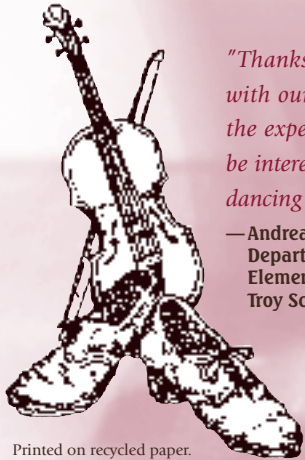
Traditional & Original Step Dance

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*"Thanks so much for your work
with our students. They enjoyed
the experience and will probably
be interested in folk music and
dancing for years to come."*

— Andrea Moon
Department Head
Elementary Vocal Music
Troy School District