



# POMEGRANATES FESTIVAL WORKSHOPS

**SOWING THE SEEDS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADITIONAL DANCE**

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**20 APRIL 2024**  
**9:00 – 17:00**

**ST. LEONARD'S LAND DANCE STUDIO**  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH**  
**HOLYROOD RD EDINBURGH EH8 8AQ**

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# — POMEGRANATES —

**SOWING THE SEEDS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADITIONAL DANCE**

TRADITIONAL  
DANCE  
FORUM OF  
SCOTLAND

**SPRINGTIME FESTIVAL CURATED BY TRADITIONAL DANCE FORUM OF SCOTLAND**

**[LINKTR.EE/POMEGRANATESFEST](https://linktr.ee/pomegranatesfest)**

# WHY POMEGRANATES?

INTRODUCTION BY ILIYANA NEDKOVA AND WENDY TIMMONS



We are delighted to welcome you to Pomegranates – the springtime festival initiated and curated by the Traditional **Dance** Forum of Scotland. Established in 2022 as part of Edinburgh Tradfest, Pomegranates returns in spring 2024 to once again sow the seeds and sequins of international traditional dance in Scotland and culminate into a celebration of UNESCO's International Dance Day (29 April) with a long weekend of dancing around the world but also filled with art and music, films and poetry.

At the heart of the festival, once again, is the intensive day of professional development workshops led by artists and creative migrants based in Scotland. This year the line-up includes 12 trad dance workshops taught by 14 dance artists accompanied live by 11 musicians with whom we circumnavigate the globe from Scotland to South Africa in just eight hours.

But how did pomegranates become a metaphor for the process of creative professional development? While curating the pilot festival edition of Pomegranates we came across the line "*Attracts me like a pomegranate*". It was initially the second line of the **Beatles** song *Something* (1969) written by **George Harrison**. "Pomegranate" was only used as a temporary filler before Harrison settled on the final lyrics, yet for us, pomegranates came to stand for the process of workshopping, trying and teaching which often remains hidden from the public eye.

What is new at Pomegranates 2024? This year we kicked off the festival season on 24 February with five world dance sessions at Edinburgh's Stockbridge Library, four interviews with feisty women of Scottish trad dance for the new two-parter podcast episode of our *Trad Dance Cast*, three heritage craft workshops, two exhibitions and a sustainable fashion show!

Amongst the highlights of this year's long festival weekend 25-30 April is a special presentation about the 60 years of Europeade; two walking tours about the dance history of Edinburgh's Old and New Town; the newly revised dance theatre adaptation of **Hamish Henderson's** *Elegies*, followed by a Lindy Hop session; our first Family Sunday and a grand finale with a triple bill of poetry, film and Hip Hop dance theatre.

Do explore all aspects of this year's festival and enjoy the pomegranates cocktail of movement!



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**25-30 APRIL 2024 POMEGRANATES FESTIVAL WEEKEND**  
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POMEGRANATES FESTIVAL IS CURATED BY TRADITIONAL DANCE FORUM OF SCOTLAND IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

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# ARTISTS' STATEMENTS

[LINKTR.EE/POMEGRANATESFEST](http://LINKTR.EE/POMEGRANATESFEST)



## NIKI AND YANGYANG

[INSTAGRAM.COM/NIKI\\_XUAN](https://www.instagram.com/NIKI_XUAN) AND [INSTAGRAM.COM/YANGYANG\\_BDA](https://www.instagram.com/YANGYANG_BDA)

*We are professional ballroom dancers with more than 20 years of experience, currently based in Edinburgh. While collaborating for the past ten years, we have become the only Asian dancers to reach the finals of the World DanceSport Federation World Championships. We have also represented China at the World Games, Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games, receiving two gold medals in DanceSport. With a great deal of social teaching expertise, including at the Beijing Dance Academy, we consider it a privilege to be able to lead a Waltz workshop and interact with everyone at Pomegranates this year.*

## LARA RUSSO

[FACEBOOK.COM/ITALIANFOLKCONNECTIONS](https://www.facebook.com/ITALIANFOLKCONNECTIONS)

*I am one of the founding members of **Italian Folk Connections**. Based in Edinburgh, our mission is to promote the interaction through the cathartic sound and moves of traditional Italian folk music and dance. I am pleased to be joined by fellow member **Inesa Vélavičiūtė**, as well as the dance musicians **Alessandro Parlato** (framed drum) and **Simone Caffari** (voice and guitar) from **The Badwills** band, also **Michele Quarta** (guitar and castanets) to share our passion for the family of Southern Italian Tarantella dances with all at Pomegranates. Very honoured to lead a Tammurriata workshop at this year's festival after introducing Pizzica Pizzica at Pomegranates 2023.*

## NADIA KHATTAB

[EL-FUNOUN.ORG](http://EL-FUNOUN.ORG)

*I have been immersed in traditional dance for nearly 25 years. My journey began at the age of eight in my native Ramallah, Palestine when I joined the **El Funoun Popular Dance Troupe**. My dedication to trad dance has remained unwavering since, including in Scotland where I have been based for a couple of years now. Alongside refining my own dance skills, I have played a vital role in preserving Palestinian dance traditions, particularly Dabkeh. Through my practice as a Dabkeh instructor and choreography assistant at El Funoun, I continue to pass on the skills and safeguard this cultural heritage. Having performed on hundreds of stages, both at home and abroad, I am really looking forward to contributing to this year's Pomegranates both as a Dabkeh teacher and performer in the festival finale.*

# ARTISTS' STATEMENTS

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## GICA LOENING

[TWITTER.COM/GLOENING](https://twitter.com/GLOENING)

*I am an Edinburgh-based fiddle player and music practitioner. A seasoned dance band musician, I founded the all-women Belle Star Ceilidh Band and Celter Schmelter Klezmer Trio who played for dancing events and festivals around Scotland. I currently perform with **Michael Alpert**, exploring Scottish and Jewish repertoire, and directing Edinburgh's Fun Fiddle project for children and adults. My musicianship connects closely to the world of dance, both Scottish and Yiddish where I at home both as a dancer and a player. I look forward to contributing to this year's Pomegranates Festival, including by leading the Yiddish dance workshop.*

## SABIE MADUBELA

[INSTAGRAM.COM/SIMPLYMRSFAULKNER](https://www.instagram.com/simplymrsfaulkner)

*Growing up in Eastern Cape, South Africa as a Xhosa girl, dance was something we lived and breathed. It didn't matter whether we were on the streets, at home or in school, dance permeated every element of our life. It is something that is second nature to me, even now that I am settled in Edinburgh. Our Xhosa dance is more about an expression of joy and a purgatory release from daily life's woes than technique. I am delighted to be able to spread the joy, confidence and unity that South African dance can bring at this year's Pomegranates Festival by leading a workshop and taking to the stage alongside other fellow dancers from across Scotland as part of the festival finale in celebration of UNESCO's International Dance Day.*

## TONY CHEN

[ECCSONLINE.COM](http://ECCSONLINE.COM)

*With over 20 years of professional experience, my dance and choreography skills range across ballet, jazz, contemporary, Chinese folk and classical. Currently, I am finalising my MSc research at the University of Edinburgh exploring dance accessibility with an emphasis on dance pedagogy and heritage. My previous experience includes professional ballet dancer with Liaoning Ballet of China for 6 years; choreographer with Hainan Dance Company of China for 2 years; dance teacher with Beijing Dance Academy for 3 years and an artist residency at Dance Base – Scotland's National Centre for Dance. I am delighted to bring Chinese Classical dance to this year's Pomegranates workshops, as well as a Chinese Folk Dance showcase of the Edinburgh Chinese Community School to the Dancing Around the the World event as part the Pomegranates Festival Family Sunday.*

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## JACK ANDERSON

[THEWORKROOM.ORG.UK/MEMBERS/JACK-ANDERSON](http://THEWORKROOM.ORG.UK/MEMBERS/JACK-ANDERSON)

*I grew up doing Irish dancing, competing for many years before touring internationally with Ériu Dance Company, Rhythm of the Dance and Celtic Legends. Having gone on to train in ballet and contemporary dance, I have been working in those contexts in the last decade but recently have been re-embracing my roots as an Irish dancer. I am really looking forward to this year's Pomegranates workshops and diving in to some of the fundamentals of both heavy shoe and light shoe Irish dancing – in all their dynamism, intricacy, strength and musicality. I am also delighted to be performing at the Pomegranates Festival finale.*

## VASSIA BOUCHAGIAR-WALKER

[FACEBOOK.COM/VASSIA.BOUGHAGIAR](http://FACEBOOK.COM/VASSIA.BOUGHAGIAR)

*With over 20 years of professional experience, my dance and choreography skills range across ballet, jazz, contemporary, early years creative dance, ballroom and Latin dance and Greek traditional dance. Having relocated to Edinburgh in 2016 to undertake my MSc degree in Dance Science and Education with the University of Edinburgh, I have since went on to teach in higher education as well as primary and secondary schools in the area, and made Scotland my home. I have been fortunate to be given opportunities to teach and choreograph for numerous dance companies including Akram Kahn, DannsEd and the Castle of Light festival. I am delighted to be bringing a taste of Greek traditional dance to this year's Pomegranates Festival with the Rebetiko workshop, together with established Edinburgh-based Greek Rebetiko musicians **Petros Tsafaridis and Yannis Konstas**.*

## LUCIA LEESON (MOTHERFUNK)

[INSTAGRAM.COM/MOTHERFUNK\\_DIMESTOP](http://INSTAGRAM.COM/MOTHERFUNK_DIMESTOP)

*I am a Glasgow-based dancer and I specialise in popping. I teach popping all over Scotland. I practice with my mentors and my students with our local Scottish popping community, the Dimestop (2013). I choreograph, perform, compete and judge battles, representing the Dimestop and my crew AIM – an all-woman popping company. I also host and organise my own battles for the wider dance community in the UK. Through my work I've had the opportunity to collaborate with companies like the Breakin' Convention, Nike, SNKRS, Footasylum and Redbull. I am delighted to be part of this year's Pomegranates as I am passionate about passing on knowledge of this dance and its cultural origin to the current and next generation of dancers in Scotland. I aim to inspire young people and women who feel intimidated or scared to step in to a style like popping.*



# WORKSHOPS AT A GLANCE

**9:00** REGISTRATION (ALL TIMES BST)

**12:45** Q&A

**9:15** Introducing artists-in-residence **Jim Mackintosh** (poetry), **Mare Tralla** (screen dance) and **Jonzi D** (hip hop theatre)

**13:00** LUNCH

Bring Your Own Lunch and Stay In

## **9:30 SCOTTISH STEP**

**Evie Waddell** with Scottish Gaelic song and **Isla Ratcliff** (fiddle)

## **13:30 IRISH STEP**

**Jack Anderson** with **Chris Lyons** (accordion)

## **10:00 REBETIKO**

**Vassia Bouchagiar-Walker** with **Petros Tsafaridis** and **Yannis Konstas** (bouzouki and guitar)

## **14:00 AMERICAN COUNTRY LINE**

**Angel Godwin** with **Jed Milroy** (guitar and banjo)

## **10:30 DABKEH**

**Nadia Khattab** with **Chris Lyons** (oud)

## **14:30 INDONESIAN TRADITIONAL**

**Brigitte Cicilya Juliet** with **Nemo Ganguli** (percussions)

**11:00** Q&A

**15:00** Q&A

## **11:15 TAMMURRIATA**

**Lara Russo & Inesa Vêlavičiūtė** with **The Badwills** (tambourine, voice, guitar, castanets and framed drum)

## **15:15 CHINESE CLASSICAL**

**Tony Chen** with **Jieyi Wang** (souna)

## **11:45 YIDDISH**

**Gica Loening** with **Ella Hashemi** (fiddle)

## **15:45 SOUTH AFRICAN TRAD**

**Sabie Madubela** with **Nemo Ganguli** drums

## **12:15 WALTZ**

**Niki & Yangyang** with **Chris Lyons** (piano)

## **16:15 HIP HOP: POPPING**

**Lucia Leeson** (**Motherfunk**) with **Nemo Ganguli** (percussions)

**16:45** Q&A + CONCLUDING REMARKS



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