ACT ONE

Storybook - The Odyssey

Rhythm of the Dance will bring you on an epic journey through the ages, from ancient mythology to the travels of the Irish emigrants, from the rolling hills and stonewalls of Connemara all the way to the modern skyscrapers of New York, with some surprises along the way.

Blind Encounter

The French revolution in the late 18th century stirred in the Irish a thirst for equality. Our hero, the military commander is too pre occupied with the impending battle and as a result, is unable to see the love that awaits him. Troops stand ready to protect their lands and as potential invaders approach, it soon becomes apparent that they are neighbouring allies. Our commander returns for a glorious finish.

The Irish Music Hall Melody

Irish storytelling has inhabited every corner of the world through song. This cheerful medley embodies the exuberance that exists in this art form.

Rhythm in Motion

The introduction of show bands to Ireland in the 1960s heralded an opportunity to feel the rhythm of the music and dance! Not to dance alone but to find a dance partner, someone who could share the passion of rhythm in motion.
Northern Exposure

The history of Ireland will always be marked by struggle; for Irish independence from English rule. However, the people of the North of Ireland have shown great courage in accepting their neighbours in the hope of a peaceful future. Communities divided by religion, led to many years of turmoil, but they’ve endeavoured to forgive, move forward and accept each other’s differences.

Bringing it All Back Home

Sean nós dance, translated from the Irish meaning, “old style”, is the oldest form of dancing in Ireland. Over time it gave way to a more intricate and controlled form known as Irish Step dancing, which is much more common today. The strong revival of Sean nós, force the two forms to compete. Who will dominate, or is there a possibility that the two forms can come together as one synergy?

The Drill

Michael Collins (1890-1922), an Irish revolutionary leader, called on many to protect the land and its people. But what made him a renowned leader was his ability to put himself above no man and share in the struggle as much as each of his own men.

The Hill of Tara

The Hill of Tara was the former seat of the High King of Ireland; it was a battle ground where pagan Celts met the Christian faithful. By the 7th century, Christianity was the prevailing religion but prior to that, paganism was the religion of the common man. This Celtic legacy is still to be found in the roots of Irish Christianity.

Lightening Strikes

Music is ingrained in the hearts of the Irish people. Various festivals take place yearly in Ireland and across the world, the streets come alive with a cacophony of rhythms and melodies that soar into the early hours of the morning.
Afro Celt

After the potato famine in 1849 many people left the homeland; the multitudes landed on the shores of the United States. The Irish embraced a new and vital community of diversity; they fused their traditional style of music with the diverse sounds of their new home. New sounds and rhythms emerged, ones that could never be imagined at home in the Emerald Isle.

Song

Will you go Lassie go, Jug of Punch, The Holy Ground The Aran Sweaters are synonymous with the Clancy Brothers, an influential Irish folk singing group in the 1960s. Their success across the country popularised Irish music in America, even touching a young Bob Dylan.

Solstice

No longer blinded by night, the lovers emerge from the darkness and become lost in their dance, a tango which fades to the oncoming sound of neighbouring dancers as they welcome in the sunrise.

ACT TWO

A New Dawn

The sun rises over the mythological hills in the east of Ireland, in the province of Ulster. Queen Maeve, the powerful queen of the western lands of Ireland, Connaught, embarks on a battle known as the “Cattle raid of Cooley”. While successful in bringing the bull back to Connaught her army is forsaken in Cooley with Cuchulainn, the “hound of Ulster”, and his Red Branch Knights.

Mountains of Mourne

A beautiful song written and composed through the eyes of a young irish emigrant as he tells his Love back home of his experiences in London.
The Sessions

The celebrations continue with a lively reel that pulsates deep in the hearts of the crowd gathered. Sporadic and spontaneous dance is inevitable as the music exposes high spirits and joyous festivity.

Beat of the Bodhrán

Granuaile (Grace O Malley), a pirate of the 16th century nicknamed the “Sea Queen of Connaught” was a fearless leader by land and by sea. She challenged and manipulated the turbulent politics of her time and was a true feminist trailblazer. Here her strengths are put to the test by the beat of the drum.

Stomp to the beat

Many variations circulate about how the brush dance originated. One such account speaks of how men outnumbered women and that the brush was used as a substitute in the kitchen while they practiced! Here our sean nós dancer is found outnumbered, and possibly in danger, can she find a way to emerge victorious?

Danny Boy

Turloch Carolan (1670-1738), a harpist, was regarded by many as Ireland’s national composer. Blindness by small pox at the age of eighteen, did not deter his musicality and for fifty years travelled all of Ireland composing and performing his tunes. The familiar anthem of Danny Boy is delicately played on the harp, portraying the heartache of a parent bidding farewell to a son as he courageously sets off for war.

Swing Time

Not only did the Irish land in places like Boston and New York in times of immigration, the ports of Savannah and New Orleans also saw them flood in. 1809 saw the first St Patrick’s day parade in New Orleans but by the roaring 20s the Irish were well and truly integrated into American society. Like much of American popular culture, swing music crossed ethnic and racial lines freely.
Celebrating the Emerald Isle

Rural Irish bars or pubs were often frequented by the working class folk and farmers. A pint could be enjoyed whilst a gathering of musicians clustered together around the open fireplace. Often a sean nós dancer would partake in the fun or craic. It was said that a good dancer could dance on a silver tray and a really excellent dancer could dance on a six pence!!

Celtic Warriors

Rhythmic cadences were often drummed in the onslaught of battle as a way to ward off the enemy. The drumming, indicative of a Celtic heritage, became a symbol of togetherness, our hearts beating in time ready to take on our adversaries.

The Journey’s End

This final time travel traverses the trial and tribulations of Ireland’s historic times at full tilt. The varying tempos, formations and rhythms lead to a climatic finish, resonating with the abundant spirit and energy of its people.