

RIVERDANCE

Cast & Band Bios

THE RIVERDANCE IRISH DANCE TROUPE

The *Riverdance* Irish Dance Troupe are world-class Irish dancers. They hail mostly from Ireland, Northern Ireland, Britain, the United States, Canada and Australia. Between them the dancers can boast of hundreds of championships won in Ireland and abroad. Most started dancing at three or four years of age at local dance schools and progressed to world championship level before being chosen to perform in *Riverdance*. The dancers would have known and competed against each other at various competitions, including the World Championships. *Riverdance* has given them the opportunity to perform together for the first time in a non-competitive way. The grace and eloquence of their soft-shoe dance and the power and precision of their hard-shoe routines clearly display the endless hours of practice and their dedication to the art of Irish Dance.

THE RIVERDANCE PRINCIPAL DANCERS

FEMALE LEAD DANCERS

MAGGIE DARLINGTON

Maggie began dancing with the Claddagh School of Irish Dance in California. She won four North American Championships, two All-Ireland Championships and in 2007 won the World Irish Dancing Championships. In 2010 Maggie performed the lead role in Busch Gardens' production Celtic Fyre and originated the lead female role in Battle of the Dance. She joined the cast of *Riverdance* in 2011 and became a Principal Dancer, touring extensively with the show in North America and internationally. She was a Principal dancer with *Heartbeat of Home*. Maggie was most recently involved with the dance production for the film *Riverdance The Animated Adventure*.

ANNA MAI FITZPATRICK

Anna Mai began her dance journey at the age of four and danced competitively for sixteen years alongside her brother Fergus. She knew from a young age that Irish Dance was her passion. She won many major championships including the All-Ireland Championships, Great Britain Championships and the British Nationals. Anna Mai joined *Riverdance* and toured China with the fantastic cast which included her brother Fergus. She moved into the principal role in 2020 and toured extensively with the 25th Anniversary Production including the UK national tour, Expo Dubai, the North American tour and most recently in Dublin, Ireland. Anna Mai has also toured with *Heartbeat of Home* and made her debut as Principal Dancer in the famous Piccadilly Theatre in London's West End.

MEADHBH KENNEDY

Meadhbh from Tara, Co. Meath Ireland began dancing at the age of four. She danced for the O'Shea School of Irish Dance and competed successfully at the World and All Ireland Championships. Since 2015, Meadhbh has toured Europe, Dubai, China and North and South

RIVERDANCE

Cast & Band Bios

America with *Riverdance*, *Heartbeat of Home*, *Celtic Legends*, *Irish Celtic* and *Prodigy: The Revolution*. Her greatest achievements to date included performing in the Piccadilly Theatre on London's West End and performing lead with the *Riverdance 25th Anniversary Show*. Meadhbh has a degree in Mathematics and English and is a qualified secondary school teacher of mathematics.

MALE LEAD DANCERS

BRANDON ASAZAWA

Brandon began dancing at the age of 4 with the Leneghan Academy of Irish Dance in Cleveland, Ohio. In sixteen years of competitive dancing, Brandon became a five-time Mid-American champion, National champion, and placed 6th at the World championships. After participating in the 2015 Riverdance Summer School, Brandon began touring with *Riverdance* at the age of 19. Brandon is privileged to be in the show that inspired him to begin Irish dancing. He has toured with *Riverdance* and *Heartbeat of Home* in North America, Europe, and China.

FERGUS FITZPATRICK

Fergus from Co. Meath, Ireland discovered his passion for dance at the age of eight. With his sister Anna Mai, he grew up competing internationally in Irish dancing competitions. Under the tutelage of Holly and Kavanagh Academy of Irish Dance, Fergus achieved his dream of becoming a World Champion in 2017. He joined *Riverdance* performing in the renowned Gaiety Theatre Dublin. As a Principal Dancer he has performed in many prestigious venues including Radio City Music Hall, New York and the Hammersmith Apollo, London. His other productions include *Heartbeat of Home* in London's Piccadilly Theatre and The Palladium. Fergus is grateful for the continued support of his friends and his family.

MATTHEW GARDINER

Matthew began Irish dancing in Denver, Colorado and moved to Galway, Ireland and continued dancing under the Hession School of Irish Dance. He won 30 major championship titles, including 3 World championships. With his brother Michael, they created Irish dancing history when they won their respective World titles in the same year. Matthew attended the Riverdance Summer School and was selected to join *Riverdance* in 2017. He performed in the *Riverdance 25th Anniversary Show* in the 3Arena, Dublin (2020), on the UK National Tour (2021) and North American Tour (2022) and joined the lead team at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin. Matthew and his brother Michael showcase their creative side with @gardinerbrothers and they have over 350 million views on social media. Matthew is a qualified Civil Engineer from the National University of Ireland, Galway and a championship winner in tennis, soccer and basketball.

RIVERDANCE

Cast & Band Bios

MICHAEL GARDINER

Michael started dancing in Denver, Colorado when he was 4 years old. At the age of 10 he moved to Galway, Ireland where he joined the renowned Hession School. Michael won many major titles including two World Championships, with a historic World Title win in the same year as his brother Matthew. Michael joined Riverdance in 2015, when he successfully auditioned at the Riverdance Summer School. As part of the *Riverdance* team, Michael is honoured to have performed with Riverdance all over the world, including North America and China. He performed for Pope Francis in Croke Park Dublin in 2018 and was part of the creative team on a special piece for the World Meeting of Families. Michael and his brother Matthew showcase their creative side on social media, where they have over three and half million followers. @gardinerbrothers Michael is a qualified Architect from the University of Limerick. He is a huge Denver Broncos fan and an avid lover of traditional Irish music.

THE RIVERDANCE BAND

MARK ALFRED (*Drums, Percussion, Bodhrán and Musical Director*)

Mark Alfred from Carrickmacross, Co.Monaghan, Ireland studied at the Royal Irish Academy of Music and Performing Arts College, Dublin. He is most recognized as being the Musical Director, drummer and percussionist in Riverdance. His ability to cross so many genres coupled with a unique and energetic style has made him one of Europe's most sought-after and highly regarded drummers and percussionists of today. Mark has worked with Lionel Richie, Simply Red, Katie Melua, Josh Groban, The Corrs, Imelda May, Paddy Moloney (The Chieftains), The Divine Comedy, Mary Coughlan, Ronan Keating, Westlife, Girls Aloud, Donny Osmond and the late Christy Hennessy. Mark recorded drums and percussion on Bill Whelan's *Riverdance 25th Anniversary* album. He made his debut on London's West End with the hit show *Come From Away* at London's Phoenix theatre. Mark proudly endorses: Pearl Drums, Zildjian Cymbals, Evans Drumheads, Vater Drumsticks, Protection Racket Cases, Sensaphonics, and Porter and Davies Thrones.

CATHAL CROKE (*Uilleann Pipes and Whistles*)

Dublin born uilleann piper Cathal Croke, a Senior All Ireland Champion and Honours Graduate in Music from the University of Limerick, has performed at festivals and toured with productions in numerous countries spanning five continents. He has played for two Presidents of Ireland, was recorded by RTÉ, has shared the stage with Ralph McTell and was recorded in the Hollywood production, 'There You'll Find Me' starring actors Vanessa Redgrave and Patrick Bergin, music scored by Timothy Williams. Touring with Heartbeat of Home from 2018, Cathal has performed

RIVERDANCE

Cast & Band Bios

in the London Palladium and later in 2019 in the West End run in the Piccadilly Theatre. LondonTheatreDirect - "*Special mention to Cathal Croke for a particularly haunting solo on the uilleann pipes*". More recently, he was appointed as the Musical Director of a new Irish music and dance show. He debuted with *Riverdance* in the Gaiety Theatre Dublin in 2019 and then toured with the show in Minneapolis and Chicago, on the UK national tour and at Expo Dubai. Cathal is honoured to be performing with the *Riverdance 25th Anniversary Show*.

HALEY RICHARDSON (*Fiddle*)

Haley Richardson is a virtuosic musician who has garnered many prestigious awards, including multiple championships at the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann (All Ireland Championships), numerous Mid-Atlantic Championships, and the coveted Fiddler of Dooney awards (2015 and 2018). She brings a rare dynamism and energy to her music, informed by thorough knowledge of the form, mastery of her instrument, and trailblazing, show-stopping technique and emotion evident in every note. Haley's most recent album, *When the Wind Blows High and Clear*, with Quinn Bachand, was nominated for 2020 Ensemble of the Year by the Canadian Folk Music Awards. Haley appeared in the cinema release of *Riverdance 25th Anniversary Show* at the 3Arena, Dublin, and was invited by Bill Whelan, to record on the *Riverdance 25th Anniversary Album*. www.HaleyRichardsonMusic.com @haleyrichardson.music

HANNAH RICHES (*Saxophone*)

Hannah Riches is a freelance saxophonist and woodwind player based in London having studied at the Royal Northern College of Music and Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She predominantly works in musical theatre, most recently touring the UK with *Dreamgirls*. Hannah has also worked with the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra, Chineke Orchestra and National Symphony Orchestra. Her saxophone quartet Marici Saxes have performed across Europe and in 2019 toured China. The group have broadcast live on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune* programme and have amassed nearly 2 million views of their popular YouTube videos.

THE RIVERDANCE DERVISH ENSEMBLE

The Riverdance Folk Dance Ensemble combines elegance and grace with verve, dynamism and joyous physicality. The company's dancers come from a diverse mix of cultural backgrounds and from many different countries throughout Eastern Europe. What they have in common is a dedication to dance and many years of training and performance in pursuit of perfection in their chosen art. Working as individual performers, they have come together for Riverdance, where

RIVERDANCE
Cast & Band Bios

they will share their individual talents and fuse the many elements that have gone into the development of their own unique style of dance.

THE RIVERDANCE FLAMENCO SOLOIST
ROCIO DUSMET

Born in Madrid, Spain Rocio began her professional career when she was eight years old. She graduated from the Royal Professional Conservatory of Dance Mariemma in the specialty of Spanish Dance in Madrid. In 2012 Rocio was awarded the Spanish Dance Prize at the XVI National Call for Dance City of Castellón. Rocio has toured France, China, Mexico, Colombia, Italy, Russia, Latvia and the United Arab Emirates as a dancer in the companies of Aida Gómez, Ibérica de Danza, Ballet Carmen Mota, Compañía Jesús Lozano, Inc. Ángel Manarre , and soloist dancer at the Festival d'Avignon. Her most recent work as a dancer and actress includes the musicals *Dirty Dancing*, *Disney Mickey's Music Festival* and the *Circus of Horrors*.

THE RIVERDANCE TAPPERS

LAMONT BROWN

Lamont is excited to be back with Riverdance 25th Anniversary show. He performed as Andy Lee in the national tour of *42nd Street*, featuring the iconic choreography by Randy Skinner. He worked on Norwegian Cruise Line performing Warren Carlyle's choreography as a Tap Brother in *After Midnight*. He has most recently been seen in the World Premiere of *Chasing Rainbows: The Road to Oz* at Papermill Playhouse and the Broadway National Tour of *White Christmas*. His regional work includes *Hairspray*, *Singin' in the Rain* and Jared Grimes' new production of *42nd Street* at the Ordway Center for Performing Arts in Minnesota and Drury Lane Theatre in Chicago. He has been fortunate enough to work alongside some of New York's most sought-after theatre choreographers, including Denis Jones, Al Blackstone, Lorin Latarro, Jeff Whiting, Jason Sparks, Richard J. Hinds, Dewitt Fleming, Shannon Lewis, Mary Anne Lamb and Lisa Gajda. Lamont is a New York-based performer and choreographer. Graduate of the Dance Theatre Conservatory at The American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City. Proud member of the Actors Equity Association. @LamontBrownNyc LamontBrownNyc.com

DHARMESH PATEL

Dharmesh Patel graduated from the Doreen Bird Performing Arts College in 2007. Since graduating he has performed in numerous operas for the English National Opera and the Royal Opera House and at Buckingham Palace, London for Prince Charles III. He starred on Sky 1's Got to Dance as a semi-finalist and he's also a member of Plague, who won the World Hip Hop International Championships in both 2005 and 2011. He was one of the original cast in

RIVERDANCE
Cast & Band Bios

Bodyguard the Musical in London's West End and has choreographed and performed for *Cirque Du Soleil*.