

PRESS RELEASE

February 17, 2020 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IRISH DANCERS LEAPING INTO "MARCH MADNESS"

Show Season and World Championships

Columbia, Maryland - Students from the **Teelin School of Irish Dance** give new meaning to "March Madness" as the Irish dancing show season, aka "Saint Patrick's Month", leaps into action with two showcase performances by the Teelin Irish Dance Company (an elite subset of Teelin School dancers) at Carroll Arts Center on Leap Day, February 29, followed by a third performance at the Weinberg Center for the Arts in Frederick on March 7. The entire school community then joins in the fun on Sunday, March 15 dancing their way down Charles Street and Pratt Street for the Baltimore St. Patrick's Day Parade. Teelin performance teams will be seen all over central Maryland throughout the month of March at a variety of events, culminating with the annual Teelin Spring Show, featuring all Teelin School students, on March 29 at the Jim Rouse Theatre in Columbia. March Madness then continues into April for eight champion soloists and twelve ceili team dancers from Teelin School who are simultaneously training to compete at the 50th annual World Irish Dancing Championships held in Dublin, Ireland, April 5-12, 2020.

"This is my favorite time of the year!" boasts **Maureen Berry, TCRG**, Owner/Director of Teelin School. "Sure, we're very busy, but we're doing what we love to do."

Kathleen Young, TCRG, Co-Owner/Business Manager adds, "An Irish dance school is not your typical dance studio. This is a niche activity, and students either love it, or they soon realize that it's not their thing. Because of that, we are fortunate to have a close-knit community of dancers and families who share a common interest in their passion for Irish dance, Irish music, and Irish culture." The Teelin School of Irish Dance is comprised of approximately 275 students hailing from seven Maryland counties and the District of Columbia, with highest caliber teaching staff including **Whitney Hanson, TCRG**, and **Caitlin Kriner, TCRG**.

Training at Teelin School focuses on a solid foundation in traditional Irish step dancing, with the opportunity to explore challenging choreography developed with innovative style. Participation in competitions is optional, and students may independently decide the extent to which they are willing to train. Competing at a championship level requires significant time commitment, with many top champions training upwards of 20 hours weekly. Separate and apart from competitions, a subset of advanced level students from the Teelin School also choose to audition for the Teelin Irish Dance Company, which is an elite team of approximately 45 dancers who

stage performances, big and small, throughout central Maryland on a regular basis. Information about upcoming performances may be found online at teelin.com/TIDC.

Irish dance competitions are governed by *An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha* (Irish for "The Irish Dancing Commission" based in Dublin, Ireland). The World Irish Dancing Championships are akin to the Olympics of Irish dancing. Approximately 5000 competitors from around the globe will participate in this year's championships in Dublin, and are only open to eligible dancers who have qualified by placing in the highest percentage of their regional or national championships earlier in the season. Among the contenders representing Teelin School in their respective age groups for solo championships will be **Abby Miller** of Catonsville, age 18, 12th grader at Maryvale Preparatory School; **Kalie Smith** of West Friendship, age 15, a 10th grader at Mount De Sales Academy; **Emma Donahoe** of Woodstock, age 15, a 9th grader at Marriotts Ridge High School; **Lily Sebastian** of Glenelg, age 14, a 9th grader at Glenelg High School; **Jonathan Brinker** of Crownsville, age 12, a 7th grade home school student; **Lillian Cimbora** of Glenwood, age 12, a 7th grader at St Louis Catholic School; **Arjun Ramachandran** of Baltimore, age 11, a 6th grader at Gilman; and **Savannah Beall** of Pasadena, age 10, a 5th grader at Monsignor Slade Catholic School.

In the team competitions, Teelin School's entry for the Senior Girls 8-Hand Ceili Championship includes **Naomi Brinker** of Crownsville; **Emily Collins** of Highland; **Katherine Ennis** of Catonsville; **Gaby Galoppo** of Odenton; **Catherine Kinkopf** of Lutherville-Timonium; **Lucy Laudeman** of Phoenix; **Claire O'Halloran** of Gaithersburg; **Ellie Ortel** of Glenwood; and Moira Connelly of Ellicott City. Teelin School's entry for the Junior Mixed 4-Hand Ceili Championships includes **Jonathan Brinker** of Crownsville; **Kaitlyn McManus** of Ellicott City; **Arjun Ramachandran** of Baltimore; and **Piper Snow** of Catonsville.

More information about Teelin School of Irish Dance may be found online at <https://teelin.com>. Results from the upcoming World Championships will be celebrated on social media accounts for @TeelinIrishDance. The Teelin Irish Dance Company performance schedule may be found at <https://teelin.com/TIDC/performance-schedule/>.

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To schedule an interview with Director Maureen Berry, please call 443-629-7808 or send email to info@teelin.com. Press materials are also available at <https://teelin.com/TIDC/press-page/>.