



Christopher Petre

Where were you or what did you see that made you say, "I want to do that!"/ How did you get started with dancing?

In 1999, I went to this little "hole-in-the-wall" local bar. I had heard that they have a DJ and they did "line dancing?" I had no idea what that was! Mac's Halfway House is tiny and dark but when we walked in there was great Country music playing! A couple of beers later I said "I can do that!" and I wedged myself between two dancers and followed "Foot Boogie." I knew nothing except that I wanted to dance! Right away the other dancers started pointing, calling directions and physically pushing me around the floor to herd me in the right direction. Boy, was it fun! I didn't want to get off the floor!

What made you want to continue?

Dancing fills a need that I feel deep down inside. It comes naturally to me. Starting back at Mac's, I began feeling the patterns repeat underneath my feet. I started turning when I was supposed to! As accepting as they were, two of the ladies there ushered me off the floor and told me I did great, but now I had to watch because they were going to do "Dizzy." Oh, I watched and that was it. I had to do that! Much to their chagrin, I got back up and wedged myself between them and I've been dancing ever since.

WORLD LINE DANCE NEWSLETTER



What type of dancing/teaching do you do?

I am starting my fourth year teaching an Intermediate class in Ardsley, New York. I hold monthly workshops in Nyack, NY. I manage Country Night at the Terrace Club in Stamford, Connecticut where I teach both line and partner dances. From time to time I teach at the Dance Ranch also in Stamford and at Kathy R's in Middletown, NY. I regularly teach at Dan Albro's workshops at his Mishnock Barn in Rhode Island. For the past three years I also have been teaching at his Mishnock and Friends Hudson Valley Weekends (coming up this October 14). This year I taught at the All American Line Dance Showdown and at the Line Dance Showdown in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I was thrilled to be invited to teach at the JG2 Marathon but due to family obligations I was unable to attend. I am pleased to be invited to any and all events. I truly enjoy teaching and I do it very well.

What dances have you choreographed that you are most proud of (because I know some of you will have a zillion of them)?

My desire to choreograph has grown and my range is expanding, both in style and execution. "Bandanna", my first dance, still feels great and as fresh as anything recent. "Rollin' In Dirt" has acquired a big following among the "club kids" who fill the floor for basics like "Cotton Eyed Joe". "Forgotten Footsteps" became a kick-a** dance when we started doing it to Big & Rich's "Love Train" (Thanks, Kathy Hunyadi for teaching it around!) Finally "Wicked Lil' Girls" for the opportunity to choreograph with one of my dance mentors, Peter Metelnick—and it came out great!

What has been a real thrill for you related to dancing?

Meeting my lovely wife, Lindsay, on the dance floor! She has become not only my dance partner but my partner for life. I proposed to her on the dance floor in front of all our friends and we were married at a line dance event by the Reverend Max Perry (who became ordained just for us!). We go dancing as often as possible.

I enjoy showing my choreography in competition especially when I win! But the real thrill for me is seeing a dance floor filled with people enjoying a dance I wrote. I also appreciate seeing that "spark" when my students grasp a dance that I have taught and to find out they have been dancing it wherever they go because they have made it their own!

What hobbies and interests do you have outside of dancing?

There's something "outside" of dancing?

Where do you consider "home"?

We live in Monroe, Connecticut in a rambling antique farmhouse that we are working on constantly between dance weekends. If something's not falling down in it, there's something falling down on it! Priorities being what they are, we have remodeled the kitchen/family room complete with a strengthened hardwood floor and a granite-topped island which is on casters so that we can move it when we want more space to dance. I am a gourmet cook and we spend a lot of time in the kitchen, working on dances and dancing while preparing meals.

What type of job do you do or dream of doing (if you would like to share it)?

I am a construction project manager; I deal with bricks, sticks, mortar and nails on a daily basis. If I won the lottery, however, I would love to build my own dance club comprising a full kitchen and bars!, multiple dance floors, stage, and bed & breakfast-type rooms for guests and visiting instructors. We would call it the "Hammertown Ale House" and it would feature fine dining, drinking and dancing!

Share information about your family (if you would like to share it).

I have a fifteen-year-old daughter who is embarrassed by her father's dancing. The curly moustache doesn't help matters any. And the fact that I wear tight jeans and rhinestone belts just pushes her right over the edge! "Oh, father, that's just sooo wrong!" If I go to pick her up and I start practicing a dance while waiting, she refuses to be seen near me.

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Who have been mentors in your dance career?

Kathy Hunyadi, my first teacher, showed me what line dancing can be like. She would come back from events and from other countries and stay late after class to teach me the very latest dances that excited her.

Peter Metelnick is so enthusiastic about dancing (not to mention HYSTERICALLY funny), I naturally gravitated to him. I have learned enormously from him as a teacher and as a choreographer. He knows so well how to make a dance that flows. I am always impressed at his ability to create step patterns that innovative and yet "user-friendly". I hope I have picked up some of these qualities in my own work.

Dan Albro and his beautiful wife, Kelly, have been the most kind and supportive people I have ever met. This applies not only to me, but also to the hundreds of dancers that they treat like family. Not only are they raising five boys, but their house is open to visiting instructors for whom there is always an opportunity to teach his many regulars at the Mishnock Barn. Dan and Kelly host the most enjoyable dance weekend, and several years ago, Dan was the first to take a chance on me as a new instructor for his event, for which I will be forever grateful. I will always remember the first dance weekend that I met Dan. He was one of many instructors teaching at a Catskill event. One night while everyone was eating dinner in the banquet hall, my wife and I were the only couple to get up and try the partner dance that he had taught that afternoon. The dance was "Six Pack Summer" and I had only just learned a "windmill turn". Seeing us struggling, Dan got in front of us with his arms held outstretched to an imaginary partner and led us through the dance. That's a small example of the level of caring that makes Dan "the Man!"

What's New

I have just finished several new dances including a "user-friendly" dance called "Rock This Room" which I will be entering into the choreography competition at the Windy City Line Dance Mania event this October. The key feature of this competition is that the dance is taught to the judges and anyone else who is interested may take the class. Come see me!

Information

My website is www.mutinyonthedancefloor.com. The website has pictures, step sheets and I have some links and I am adding more so that you can listen to the music clips for the dances. Email me at Petrethepirate@mutinyonthedancefloor.com.