



Xian Na "Sonia" Carlson

Folk Arts: Chinese Dance and Culture



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Sonia Carlson began learning folk dances as a child growing up in Zhangzhou, China. From her aunt she learned the *Tuan Shan*, (fan dance), the *Xin Jiang* regional dance and *Tai Ji* forms. Those lessons sparked a lifelong interest in sharing Chinese culture through dance, music and the arts. In 1987 Sonia moved from China to the Gardnerville area where she has continued to teach traditional Chinese dances derived from several of the 50 provinces to her own young children as well as others in the community, from kindergartners to adults.

Participating in one of her programs could be called a "holistic" approach to Chinese dance. Sonia intertwines activities and cultural facts about China and Chinese New Year traditions throughout her programs, teaching and encouraging participants to try calligraphy, origami, crafts and games.

Sonia and her dancers perform traditional Chinese and New Years dances such as the "long-sleeved", "ribbon," "sword" and "silk-fan" dances. She explains the historical and cultural background and regional variations of the performances and the costumes, which she makes herself or buys in China. She also encourages audiences to share in other forms of cultural learning by teaching them the basics of Chinese characters and language along with other traditional arts. Audiences leave Sonia's presentations able to teach others about aspects of traditional Chinese culture.

Court dances and folk dances are the two major categories of Chinese dance. There are several key emphases in Chinese court and folk dances, they are: hand - eye coordination, the use of circular patterns in space "drawn" by body movements, the use of props, stylized hand and finger gestures, body movement accents and steps in relation to the music.

Program Types

45 minute - 1 hour demonstrations or performances, festival performances or demonstrations (booth or exhibition); school assemblies; productions in theater setting

Language Proficiencies

English

Fees

Call to Inquire

Availability

Call to Inquire

Audiences

School (K-12), college, young adult, adult, seniors

Venues

Schools K-12, colleges and universities, libraries, museums, community and senior centers, special events, festivals and fairs.

Technical requirements

Call to inquire

Counties

Carson City, Douglas, Washoe