

**Penn Live Arts Presents Trinity Irish Dance Company,  
February 18-19**

***World Champion Ali Doughty, a Philadelphia-area native, to perform***

***Philadelphia premieres include **An Sorcas** by Founding Artistic Director Mark Howard and Associate Artistic Director Chelsea Hoy, **American Traffic** by tap extraordinaires Michelle Dorrance and Melinda Sullivan, and **Howard's Push** and **Johnny*****

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(Philadelphia – February 17, 2022) — [Penn Live Arts](#) presents Trinity Irish Dance Company (TIDC) February 18 and 19 at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts. Originally scheduled for March 2020, this long-awaited appearance by TIDC fuses Ireland's vibrant tradition and legacy with ever-evolving American innovation in a performance of show stopping aerial grace, lightning-fast agility, and percussive power.

For tickets and further information, visit [PennLiveArts.org](https://PennLiveArts.org). All audience members must present proof of vaccination, a [PennOpen Campus Green Pass](#) completed on the day of the performance, and wear a mask at all times while in the building. See full health and safety information for in-person audiences at [PennLiveArts.org/safety](https://PennLiveArts.org/safety).

Philadelphia-area native and TIDC Artistic Associate **Ali Doughty**, who won the solo world championship for the United States in 2014, will be sharing her power as a professional performing artist with her hometown audience for the first time. As part of her return home, she will perform the solo work **Sparks**, inspired by her technical prowess, where she will be accompanied by fiddle prodigy, Jake James. Doughty started dancing at the age of eight with the McDade School of Irish Dance in Philadelphia, PA. After moving to Ohio to attend the University of Dayton in 2012, she continued her competitive dancing career with The Academy in Columbus, Ohio. While balancing her studies in exercise physiology, Doughty continued to compete internationally and was ultimately crowned World Champion in 2014. Upon her graduation, Philadelphia-born Doughty moved to Chicago to join the TIDC movement and begin her evolution from formidable competitor to a limitless performing artist while receiving her doctorate in physical therapy at Northwestern University. With a seamless blend of aerial grace and percussive power, Doughty connects with audiences on a deep level. She is part of a nucleus of company members that are carrying the TIDC legacy to new heights.

TIDC's Philadelphia premieres will include: **An Sorcas**, choreographed by Emmy-award winning TIDC founder and Artistic Director Mark Howard and Associate Artistic Director Chelsea Hoy; **American Traffic**, by NYC-based tap dancer and MacArthur Genius Grant recipient Michelle Dorrance and tap dancer and choreographer Melinda Sullivan; and audience favorite **Push**, choreographed by Howard.

Howard and Hoy's **An Sorcas** (Gaelic for "The Circus") examines the battle between substance and spectacle. in a progression from idolatry to empathy, with original lyrics, music, and layers of symbolism. Dorrance and Sullivan's **American Traffic** is a hybrid of Irish step and American tap that plays at the intersection of rhythmic sensibilities and rebellious histories. It celebrates the nuanced differences between the two forms and creates a

new percussive language. **Push** is an explosion of hard-driving percussive power that exemplifies the company's consistent message of female empowerment. **Johnny** is one of Howard's signature works which altered the landscape of Irish dance. The program will be rounded out by classic TIDC pieces, including **Soles, A New Dawn, Communion, and Black Rose.**

The program features dancers **Ali Doughty, Michael Fleck, Lydia Fredrick, Anna Gorman, Abigail Graham-Luke, Chelsea Hoy, Francisco Lemus, Danielle Masbruch, Sierra McNall, Kaela Milewski, Claudia Morrison, Sydney Niewiedzial, Colleen O'Connor, Kelsey Parry, Gracie Peters, Clare Rahner, Kaitlyn Sardin,** and **Marissa Wurster**; and musicians **Jake James, Christopher Kulwin, Brendan O'Shea,** and **Steven Rutledge.** For full bios, please see the [performance program](#).

### **About the Artists**

Chicago/Milwaukee-based **Trinity Irish Dance Company** is the high watermark of the art form; a uniquely Irish-American dance legacy that is rooted in tradition, yet forward-looking and ever-evolving. The result is a fresh, engaging, and integrity-filled vision that goes beyond the source without losing touch with its essence. Founded in 1990, by Founding Artistic Director Mark Howard, TIDC is the birthplace of progressive Irish dance, an innovative movement genre which opened new avenues of artistic freedom that led directly to commercial productions such as *Riverdance*. TIDC has significantly changed the direction and scope of Irish dance, re-introducing the art form as the phenomenon it is today. With a unique blend of uncompromising power and grace, TIDC sends a consistent message of female empowerment with a repertory that has elevated the art form for nearly three decades. For more information, visit [TrinityIrishDanceCompany.com](http://TrinityIrishDanceCompany.com).

### **Mark Howard (Founding Artistic Director/Choreographer)**

For more than three decades, this Emmy® Award-winning choreographer has been striving for and achieving that which is profoundly significant and equally difficult to attain—the transcendence of craft to art and the synthesis of forms to create something that is forward-looking and new. His work maintains integrity while simultaneously going beyond the framework of ethnicity to carve new traditions.

Born in Yorkshire, England, and raised in Chicago, Howard began his dancing career at eight years old at the Dennehy School of Irish Dance. He began teaching when he was only 17 years old, and by 19, he had launched the Trinity Academy of Irish Dance, subsequently leading them to unprecedented world championship team titles for the United States—the first when he was only 25.

Howard's pioneering work in the late 80s led to his unique transition from the competitive stage to the performing arts stage and began his gradual evolution from coach to artistic director. By 1990, these formative years led to the creation of a nonprofit forum, Trinity Irish Dance Company (TIDC), to celebrate and further his work. From its inception, TIDC has been met with great critical acclaim at renowned venues across the world.

Howard has been named three times as one of *Irish American Magazine's* "Top 100 Irish-Americans." His work has led to numerous Choreographer's Fellowships awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts. From PBS and ABC specials to extensive film work for Disney, Touchstone, Universal and DreamWorks, Howard has worked with Oprah Winfrey, Ron Howard and Sam Mendez, among many other notables. He was the personal dance coach for actors Tom Hanks and Daniel Craig while working on the film *Road to Perdition*. Howard continues to choreograph new works, as well as expand his independent career to work in theatre, television, concert and film. The feature film *SOLES*, which focuses on Howard and Trinity, is currently in the works.

### **Chelsea Hoy (Associate Artistic Director/Choreographer)**

At 26, Denver-born Hoy has already become a major player in the performing arts world. Generous, rebellious, creative and complex, her choreographic influence has significantly shaped TIDC's newest works, from *Communion* to *Soles* and *Push*. Hoy recently co-choreographed her first full-length piece, *An Sorcas (The Circus)*, which saw its preview in Tokyo and world premiere at Chicago's Auditorium Theatre in 2019.

Hoy grew up dancing competitively for the Wick School of Irish Dance in Denver, Colorado. She joined TIDC in 2014 after she began her studies at Loyola University Chicago. She graduated in 2017 with bachelor's degrees in psychology and photography. In addition to helping guide the company's future, she is a professional photographer, dance instructor and visual artist. Hoy's love of empowering children through the arts continues to shape TIDC's outreach programming. A powerful activist and artist, she has been entrusted with TIDC's ethos and future.

### **About Penn Live Arts**

The 2021-22 season marks the first for Penn Live Arts. This new identity heralds a wider variety of programming for audiences, as well as presentations outside the physical Annenberg Center space, and a deeper integration with the University of Pennsylvania and Philadelphia communities. Headquartered at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, Penn Live Arts is the leading presenter of innovative and transformative performing arts experiences in Philadelphia, bringing world-class music, dance, theatre and film to an annual audience of over 80,000 on the University of Pennsylvania campus and at venues throughout the city. Penn Live Arts is an artistic crossroads joining Penn and the greater Philadelphia region. In reflection of Penn's core values as a world-respected academic institution, Penn Live Arts emphasizes artistic and intellectual excellence and diversity in its offerings; prioritizes broad inclusiveness in the artists, audiences and groups it serves; manages outstanding performance, conference and meeting facilities; and boasts comprehensive event planning, production support and customer service. Penn Live Arts is a key asset for the University's students and faculty, enhancing curriculum through connections with master artists, hosting student productions on professional stages, providing career development opportunities and being a true advocate for student performing arts. Penn Live Arts broadens arts access by actively engaging a wide range of school audiences and inclusive communities from campus, the West Philadelphia neighborhood and the surrounding region. Visit [PennLiveArts.org](https://PennLiveArts.org).

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### **CALENDAR LISTING**

#### **Trinity Irish Dance Company**

Friday, February 18, 8 PM

Saturday, February 19, 2 PM

Saturday, February 19, 8 PM

Trinity Irish Dance Company is the birthplace of progressive Irish dance. With hard-driving percussive power, lightning-fast agility and aerial grace, expect "award-winning exactness with an experimental edge" (*The Chicago Tribune*) as this troupe fuses Ireland's vibrant tradition and legacy with ever-evolving, American innovation. Trinity's "impossibly complex" (*The New York Times*) and awe-inspiring Irish dance delivers everything audiences expect, but more than they can possibly imagine.

Visit [PennLiveArts.org](https://PennLiveArts.org) for more information.

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