

Richard Balazs



Richard Balazs was born in 1976 in Kisvarda, a small town in northeastern Hungary. Richard grew up in a dancing family. His father, Dr. Gustav Balazs, is one of the most renowned authorities on Hungarian Gypsy dance and folklore. His aunts, uncles and cousins are among the best Gypsy dancers in the Szatmar region of Hungary and are often the subjects of anthropologists and folk dance researchers.

In 1983, Richard joined the children's folk dance group "Igrice" and began performing in festivals in Hungary and throughout Europe. In 1990, Richard went to Finland to study classical ballet. Returning to Hungary in 1991, he became a regular instructor at his father's International Gypsy Dance Camp until 1995. In 1992, he joined his father's gypsy music group "Maljaki Luludji" and traveled with them throughout Europe promoting Gypsy culture, songs, and dances. That same year, he joined the folk dance ensemble "Nyírség," one of the most renowned performing ensembles in Hungary. There, he broadened his repertoire and worked with world famous Hungarian choreographers. In 1993, Richard won Hungary's National Talent Search in the Folk Dance Soloist category. However, the greatest achievement of his career came in 1995 when he won the Golden Spur award as a soloist, the highest recognition a folk dancer can receive.

In 1995, at the age of 18, Richard was awarded a scholarship to join the Duquesne University Tamburitzans, a folk group specializing in Eastern European music, song and dance. There he was exposed to different music and dance styles, while at the same time promoting his own Hungarian and Gypsy culture by choreographing for the group. He continues to choreograph for the Tamburitzans and other folk dance groups across the United States and Canada and has taught at various workshops. He is now the Artistic Director of Folk Factory, a dance ensemble whose mission is to preserve and perpetuate authentic Eastern European folklore through both traditional and contemporary productions.