





# Jayne Torvill & Christopher Dean

## HONORED BY ICE THEATRE OF NEW YORK

Ice Theatre of New York (ITNY) returned to indoor performances with fervor and force following a two and a half year hiatus, by honoring legendary ice dancers Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean at its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary Benefit Gala at New York's Chelsea Piers on May 9.

The annual gala celebrates the lives and careers of notable members of the skating community.

"It is a great honor for us to recognize those who are accomplished within our ice dance world and have stayed connected to the field beyond their own performances," said Moira North, ITNY founder and artistic director. "Those who have given back to our 'icy' world and have been a role model for others to follow.

"ITNY is delighted to honor Jayne and Chris as its first ice dance honorees in a long list of great ice artists."

Torvill and Dean's golden dance at the 1984 Olympic Winter Games in Sarajevo remains one of the most iconic in the history of figure skating.

Record numbers of viewers around the world were captivated as the British duo blazed a new path and set a new standard in the field of ice dance with their riveting performance to Ravel's "Bolero."

Turning professional following those Games, they began producing their own shows and touring the world.

A decade after their historic victory in Sarajevo, and just weeks after their bronze-medal finish at the 1994 Winter Olympics, Torvill and Dean opened their famed "Face the Music" show in Sheffield, England, which they would later take to Europe, Australia and North America.

In 1998, they produced a groundbreaking show, "Ice Adventures," at Wembley Stadium which included a "flying ice ballet."

The gala evening in New York City opened with co-chairs

Tracy Wilson and Brian Orser paying tribute to the British icons and sharing some of their own personal memories.

"As an ice dancer in the 1980s, you can only imagine how much I looked up to Jayne and Christopher. My first year at the World Championships was the year of the legendary 'Mack and Mabel' program," said Wilson.

"I have had the privilege of attending a number of Olympics and one of my all-time favorite moments at an Olympic Games happened in Sarajevo. I remember Rob (McCall) and I had to go to a practice session at 6:30 in the morning. There was nobody else on the bus and we were kind of feeling a little sorry for ourselves.

"When we arrived at the cold arena, the lights were on, and we could hear someone skating. We did not realize there was a six o'clock practice and there was just one dance team on the ice — Jayne and Chris.

"We warmed up rink side so we could soak it all in. There was no one else on the session, and when their music rotation number came up again, 'Bolero' began to play. They started that program minutes after 6 a.m. and did it from beginning to end — every detail, full emotion as though there was a full arena.

"I will never forget that private showing, how much it meant to me and inspired me, and how they raised the level of professionalism in our sport.

"What Jayne and Chris were able to do was literally transcend the sport of figure skating. They drew so many fans and so much attention from all walks of life.

"To watch their performances was to be taken out of your head and into your heart. They had a presence that reached the rafters, and their musicality and the energy that they created drew everyone out onto the ice with them."

Orser also recalled his encounters with Torvill and Dean. "My time with Jayne and Chris mainly took place years

◀ ITNY gala co-chairs Brian Orser and Tracy Wilson presented 2022 honorees Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean with the Tiffany ice buckets.





Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean with ITNY founder Moira North.



Paul Wylie and his wife Kate attended the ITNY Benefit Gala.

later as a professional skater, but I do remember — I think it was 1985 — I was at a competition in London, England. I finished competing on the Saturday, and on Sunday I took a train to Nottingham where you guys were doing your first tour. I scored a ticket, which was hard to get, and watched the show.

"It was magnificent, and I thought to myself, 'I hope that one day I get to be in a show like this' because it was so special.

"Many years later we were touring together on *Stars on Ice*, and we did a group number with Jayne and Chris, Kristi Yamaguchi and myself to a Bach piece. So my dream came true; it was mission accomplished."

Those recollections were followed by a video message from their good friend Robin Cousins, the 1980 Olympic champion.

ITNY presented a video, the "Art of Torvill and Dean," which captured some of the highlights from their most memorable programs and ended with a clip of their unforgettable "Bolero" performance at the 1984 Games.

As Torvill and Dean took the podium,

the guests, which included Paul Wylie, Richard Dwyer, Slavka Kohout Button, dignitaries and loyal ITNY patrons, rose in a standing ovation.

"Thank you so much. It is such an honor. We so appreciate that we have been invited here," said Torvill.

"I would also like to say thank you to all the skaters who performed this evening. It was truly an inspiration. It is lovely to see the passion you guys have because that is what we had."

"One of the worst things I don't like to do is watch myself skate," said Dean with a laugh. "As we get older, we do reflect, go back and remember things. When you are young there are mountains

“To watch their performances was to be taken out of your head and into your heart.”

—Tracy Wilson

to climb and things to be done, but as you get older you think, 'Oh God, that mountain is too high now.'

"Being able to watch the young skaters here tonight brought back so many memories for us of when we were young. We still have the passion, but it is only between certain hours these days.

"We still skate, we still perform. We have this little show in England that is in its 15<sup>th</sup> season, and they still make us skate on it. But it is age-appropriate skating — that is important to note," he added with a laugh.

Dean thanked Wilson and Orser for their "lovely introduction," adding that "tonight I learned a couple of new things from Tracy and Brian."

"We thought that it was just the cleaners in the building, but it was you and Rob, too.

"We always tell this story. We were the only people who got on the bus that morning. For a 6 a.m. practice it meant getting up at 4:30. We always did a run through from beginning to end because we always thought it would psyche out the other competitors, but nobody was



“We always expected perfection of ourselves, and we always performed — and continue to perform — to the best of our abilities. That’s been the theme of our career, I would say — do the very best you can. It’s always about wanting to do your best.” —Christopher Dean

there. As we finished, there was this applause around the building from the cleaners, but Tracy and Rob were there as well.

“The year 1984 was a big one for us, but it was also a big year for Ice Theatre of New York because that was the beginning. It is ITNY’s night tonight and we are so happy that we can be a part of it.

“It is incredible to see what they have achieved over the years. What’s wonderful is the diversity, inclusivity and creativity that goes into this organization.”

Dean noted that being honored by ITNY “ranked up there” with he and Jayne being named British national treasures by the Queen on the occasion of her Platinum Jubilee.

“That is special to us, but this evening is also at that level, so thank you.”

The home season and benefit performances began with “School Figures” set to a poem by Elee Kraljii Gardiner, the daughter of 1956 Olympic champion Tenley Albright, and culminated with a touching performance to “Ensemble for Peace.”

Choreographed by ITNY’s ensemble director Elisa Angeli, the program is a dedication to the victims of the war in Ukraine, as well as those who have been harmed by other conflicts throughout the world.

The ITNY Ensemble performed several world premieres, starting with “Body Parts,” a piece that examines



“Ensemble for Peace”

natural human movement and flow, choreographed by Mauro Bruni.

Two pieces focused on climate change: “Of Water and Ice” — a look at the interaction between liquids and solids in polar areas of the world — by modern dance choreographer Jody Sperling, and “Sacrosanct,” which explores trees as treasures of communication, choreographed by former John Curry Company member Lorna Brown.

“Voguing,” a deep dive into the sacredness of human individuality, was performed by Canadian guest artist Emanuel Sandhu. His former coach, Joanne McLeod, and Cesar Valentino choreographed the piece.

Oona Brown and Gage Brown, the

2022 World Junior ice dance champions and ITNY apprentices, performed their rhythm dance from last season.

Betty Wasserman, the 2022 “Ice Angel” honoree, displayed true originality when she delivered an engaging speech filled with humor, dressed in a dazzling angelic costume complete with a halo.

Wasserman’s talk set the stage for the distinguished Alumni Award Recipients for 2022, Darlene Gilbert Parent and Wade Corbett, who as early company members were recognized for their important and enduring contributions.

While the 2022 home season marked the first indoor performances in more than two years, ITNY had continued to produce pop-up concerts throughout the pandemic at all the New York City rinks.

It also produced virtual performances, including “Pivoting Through the Pandemic,” which was streamed last spring and featured Elladj Baldé, Jason Brown and Kaitlyn Weaver.

ITNY plans to host a fall event honoring Mexican champion Donovan Carillo with the Will Sears Award (given to a skater who has shown exceptional daring and persistence in pursuit of his passion), a staging of its first new media piece with motion capture, “Unseen” by LaJuné McMillian, and its continuing outreach programming for New York City public school children.

Jason Brown has been named as the 2023 honoree and will be celebrated at the ITNY Benefit Gala next May. [IFS](#)

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