

Chippendales

Chippendales is a touring dance troupe best known for its male striptease performances and for its dancers' distinctive upper body costume of a bow tie and shirt cuffs worn on an otherwise bare torso. Established in 1979, Chippendales was the first all-male stripping troupe to make a business performing for mostly female audiences. Through the quality of its staging and choreography, Chippendales also helped legitimize stripping as a form of popular entertainment.

Today, the company produces Broadway-style shows worldwide and licenses its intellectual property for select consumer products ranging from apparel and accessories to slot machines and video games. The Chippendales perform in a ten-million dollar theater and lounge built specifically for them at the Rio All Suite Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. Annually, the official men of Chippendales are seen by almost two million people worldwide, performing in more than 25 cities in the U.S., 23 cities in Central and South America, 60 European cities, four Asian countries, and eight South African cities. The main troupe members today are Billy Jeffrey, Sami Eskelin, Nathan Minor, Jaymes Vaughan, Stacey Robinson, James Davis and Johnny Howes.

After operating a Mobil gas station, Somen Banerjee and his partner, Loyola Law School law student Bruce Nahin, bought a failed west Los Angeles disco named Destiny II and turned it into a nightclub featuring female mud wrestling and a "Female Exotic Dancing Night." The club name Chippendales was suggested by Nahin because of the Chippendale style furniture at the club.

The concept of the male strip show was brought to Banerjee and Nahin by Paul Snider (later notorious for killing his estranged wife, Playboy Playmate Dorothy Stratten and then himself) who was desperate to revive his nightclub business because other ideas of backgammon and female mud wrestling were failing. Banerjee was the creative force behind Chippendales. The initial script was written by Richard Barsh, who was the show's first Emcee. The concept immediately gained a huge female following. Together with choreographer and Emmy award winner Nicholas De Noia and his associate Candace Mayeron (Snider had died in 1980), Chippendales was expanded to New York's Club Magique, London, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Thailand, Australia, Philadelphia, and Florida. Authorized shows also toured extensively in the U.S., Asia, and Europe.

For Chippendales, the early 1980s were filled with major lawsuits pertaining to personal injury, alleged sexual bias against male guests, charges of racial discrimination and a later 1988 bankruptcy. Eventually, De Noia and Banerjee fell out, but the company continues to battle similar male revues in the courts. Chippendales successfully registered its "Cuffs and Collar" uniform as a trademark in 2003. In 2011, St. Joseph, Missouri, police shut down a show by a Chippendales impostor group, alleging that it violated Missouri's adult entertainment laws.

The company is currently run by Kevin Denberg, whose grandfather was part of a partnership with Steve and Gary Rogers to open a Chippendales club in New York City in the 1980s. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chippendales>]

