



Half Moon Sword

Traditional English Sword Dancing

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL NEW YORK SWORD DANCE FESTIVAL TO BE HELD
FEB. 18-19 IN NEW YORK CITY

The 27th Annual New York Sword Dance Festival will be held in New York City, on Feb. 18-19, 2012. The event will feature 12 teams, as the performing groups are known, in an exciting weekend of performances in public spaces around the city. The festival, which Half Moon first organized in 1986, was the first such event in North America to focus on English-style sword dancing.

"When we held our first Sword Dance Festival back in 1986, there were no other teams in North America that only did sword dancing," says Deirdre Bialo-Padin, a founding member of the group. "Now there are groups all over the U.S. and some in Canada. We feel that the festival played a part in expanding the popularity of the dancing. Some people even formed groups just so they could come to the festival."

Sword dancing is a winter celebration practiced in the farming and coal-mining regions of northern England, where the annual visit of the local sword dancers to the village homes was thought to guarantee good luck for the year. The Festival will feature both mystical, stately longsword and vigorous rapper sword dancing, with live music on fiddle, accordion, and other instruments. In both types of sword dance, the dancers are linked in a ring by the "swords" they hold in their hands while they work as a team to weave intricate figures and patterns without breaking the circle. The dances are thought to have roots in ancient rituals, traces of which can still be seen in these present-day displays of skill. Performances will also include Morris dancing, Molly dancing, and related English folk traditions.

This year's festival will feature the "home team," Half Moon Sword, and their many guests for a weekend of exciting and crowd-pleasing entertainment. The event will kick-off with an opening

performance at the Staten Island Ferry Terminal in Manhattan on Saturday the 18th, and conclude with a grand finale in the auditorium at the Brooklyn Museum of Art on Sunday the 19th. Additional performances will be held in numerous libraries, museums, churches, and other public spaces. All performances are free, although there is an admission charge to enter the museums.

A schedule of the performances follows. For more information, or to see photos, e-mail Yonina Gordon at yonina.ena@gmail.com or call (212) 569-4374. You may also check the team Web site at www.halfmoonsword.org, or contact the team at halfmoonsword@gmail.com.

SCHEDULE FOR THE 27TH NEW YORK SWORD DANCE FESTIVAL
Saturday, February 18th, 2012 -- Manhattan (mostly)

9:30 a.m.

Staten Island Ferry Terminal
Whitehall Terminal at 1 Whitehall Street @ South Street

1:00 p.m.

Chatham Square Library
33 East Broadway (near Catherine Street)

1:00 p.m. & 3:00 p.m.

Dana Discovery Center
110th Street (between Fifth Avenue & Lenox Avenue) in Central Park

1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Jefferson Market Public Library
425 6th Avenue @ 10th Street

1:00 p.m. & 3:00 p.m.

Museum of the City of New York
1220 5th Avenue @ 103rd Street

3:00 p.m.

Brooklyn Heights Library
280 Cadman Plaza West at Tillary Street, Brooklyn

Sunday, February 19th, 2012 -- Brooklyn

12:30 p.m.

First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn
Pierrepont & Monroe Streets, Brooklyn

12:30 p.m.

Old First Reformed Church
126 7th Avenue, between Carroll & President Streets, Brooklyn

12:30 p.m.

Half Moon Sword www.halfmoonsword.org halfmoonsword@gmail.com

St. John's Episcopal Church
139 St. Johns Place, between 6th & 7th Avenues, Brooklyn

2:30 p.m.
Brooklyn Museum (auditorium)
200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn

TEAMS ATTENDING

Charm City Rapper; Baltimore, MD
Cutting Edge; Washington, D.C.
Half Moon Sword; New York, NY
Handsome Molly; Princeton, NJ
New Haven Morris and Sword; New Haven, CT
New Moon Sword; New York; NY
Orion Longsword; Boston; MA
Short Sword; Minneapolis; MN
Snickersnack; Boston, MA
That Long Tall Sword; Northampton, MA
Toronto Women's Sword; Toronto, ON
Vineyard Swordfish; Martha's Vineyard, MA

ABOUT HALF MOON SWORD

Half Moon Sword is a women's sword dance team that has been dancing together since 1981. Their skillful dance displays have gained them a reputation here and in England for precision and fresh interpretations of traditional dances. The members of Half Moon Sword share a love of this dance form with all its ritual and mystery. The Annual New York Sword Dance Festival is their opportunity to share the excitement of sword dancing with other dancers and the public. The name Half Moon is inspired by Henry Hudson's ship, the Halve Maen, on which Henry Hudson voyaged to North America in 1609.