



Half Moon Sword

Traditional English Sword Dancing

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL NEW YORK SWORD DANCE FESTIVAL
TO BE HELD FEB. 15-16 IN NEW YORK CITY

The 29th Annual New York Sword Dance Festival will be held in New York City, on Feb. 15-16, 2014. The event will feature 12 teams, as the performing groups are known, in an exciting weekend of performances in public spaces in various locations in Manhattan and Brooklyn. The festival, which Half Moon first organized in 1985, 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 1985, 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 English-style step dancing, Morris dancing, and related English folk traditions.

(more)

29th Annual New York Sword Dance Festival (Add 1)

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.

Performances will be held in numerous libraries, museums, churches, and other public spaces in Manhattan and Brooklyn. The festival will conclude with a grand finale in the auditorium at the Brooklyn Museum of Art on Sunday the 16th. All performances are free, although there is a suggested donation to enter the Brooklyn Museum.

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 29TH NEW YORK SWORD DANCE FESTIVAL

Saturday, February 15th, 2014 -- Brooklyn and Manhattan

12:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.
Brooklyn Heights Library
280 Cadman Plaza West, Brooklyn

1:00 p.m. & 3:00 p.m.
115th Street Library
203 West 115th Street @ 7th Avenue, Manhattan

1:30 p.m. & 3:00 p.m.
Dana Discovery Center
110th Street (between Fifth Avenue & Lenox Avenue)
in Central Park, Manhattan

3:00 p.m.
Park Slope Library
431 6th Avenue @ 9th Street, Brooklyn

Sunday, February 16th, 2014 -- Brooklyn

12:30 p.m.
Brooklyn Conservatory of Music
58 7th Avenue, Brooklyn

(more)

29th Annual New York Sword Dance Festival (Add 2)

12:30 p.m.
St. John's Episcopal Church
139 St. Johns Place, between 6th & 7th Avenues, Brooklyn

1:00 p.m.

Old First Reformed Church

126 7th Avenue, between Carroll & President Streets, Brooklyn

2:30 p.m.

Brooklyn Museum (auditorium)

200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn

TEAMS ATTENDING

Bubble Rapper; Boston, Massachusetts

Charm City Rapper; Baltimore, Maryland

Cutting Edge; Washington, D.C.

Griggstown Lock; Princeton, New Jersey

Half Moon Sword; New York, New York

Leap of Faith; San Francisco, California

No Apologies; Boston, Massachusetts

Orion Longsword; Boston, Massachusetts

Pocket Flyers; Boston, Massachusetts

Still River Sword; Boston, Massachusetts

That Long Tall Sword; Northampton, Massachusetts

Vineyard Swordfish; Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

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. In recent years the team has performed at DART in Amherst, Boston, and Baltimore; at the annual New England Folk Festival in Massachusetts, and at the Marlboro Morris Ale in Vermont. The name Half Moon is inspired by Henry Hudson's ship, the Halve Maen, on which Henry Hudson voyaged to North America in 1609.

Use of library space by the New York Sword Dance Festival for this program does not indicate endorsement by The New York Public Library.

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