



Half Moon Sword

Traditional English Sword Dancing

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL NEW YORK SWORD DANCE FESTIVAL TO BE HELD FEB. 13-14 IN NEW YORK CITY

The 31st Annual New York Sword Dance Festival will be held in New York City, on Feb. 13-14, 2016. 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, Molly dancing, and related English folk traditions.

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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 dancers will perform in various 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 on Sunday the 14th. 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 31ST NEW YORK SWORD DANCE FESTIVAL
Saturday, February 13th, 2016 -- Brooklyn and Manhattan

1:00 p.m.
Brooklyn Heights Library
280 Cadman Plaza West, Brooklyn

1:00 p.m.
Seward Park Library
192 East Broadway, Manhattan

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

1:30 p.m.
Museum of the City of New York
1220 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan

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

3:00 p.m.
Jefferson Market Library
425 Sixth Avenue, Manhattan

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

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31st Annual New York Sword Dance Festival (Add 2)

Sunday, February 14th, 2016 -- Brooklyn

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

12:30 p.m.
Spoke the Hub Dancing,
295 Douglass Street, between Third & Fourth Avenues, 1st Floor

1:00 p.m.
Bluebird
504 Flatbush Avenue

1:00 p.m.
Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture
53 Prospect Park West

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
Duck or Grouse Rapper; Minneapolis, Minnesota
Griggstown Lock; Princeton, New Jersey
Half Moon Sword; New York, New York
Handsome Molly; Princeton, New Jersey
Marlboro Morris and Sword; Marlboro, Vermont
Orion Longsword; Boston, Massachusetts
Pocket Flyers; Boston, Massachusetts
Rapa Bora; Berea, Kentucky
Still River Sword; Boston, Massachusetts
That Long Tall Sword; Northampton, 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 the Dance America Rapper Tournament (DART) in Amherst, Baltimore, Boston, and Toronto; 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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