



## **Half Moon Sword**

### **Traditional English Sword Dancing**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Contact: Sarah Henry  
sarahhenry@rcn.com  
halfmoonsword@gmail.com

#### THIRTY-SECOND ANNUAL NEW YORK SWORD DANCE FESTIVAL TO BE HELD FEB. 18-19 IN NEW YORK CITY

The 32nd Annual New York Sword Dance Festival will be held in New York City, on Feb. 18-19, 2017. The event will feature 10 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 the New York-based Half Moon Sword 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 did only 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 and related English folk traditions.

(more)

## **32nd 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 family entertainment. The dancers will perform in various libraries, museums, and churches. All performances are free, although there is a suggested donation to enter the Museum of the City of New York.

A schedule of the performances follows. For more information, or to see photos, e-mail Sarah Henry at [sarahhenry@rcn.com](mailto:sarahhenry@rcn.com) or call 917-689-4372. You may also check the team Web site at [www.halfmoonsword.org](http://www.halfmoonsword.org), or contact the team at [halfmoonsword@gmail.com](mailto:halfmoonsword@gmail.com)

### **PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE FOR THE 32ND NEW YORK SWORD DANCE FESTIVAL Saturday, February 18th, 2017 – Manhattan and Brooklyn**

1:00 p.m.

Museum of the City of New York  
1220 Fifth Avenue at 103<sup>rd</sup> Street, Manhattan

1:00 p.m.

Park Slope Library  
431 Sixth Avenue @ 9th Street, Brooklyn

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

Seward Park Library  
192 East Broadway, Manhattan

3:00 p.m.

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

3:00 p.m.

115th Street Library  
203 West 115th Street @ 7th Avenue, Manhattan

(more)

**32nd Annual New York Sword Dance Festival (Add 2)**

**Sunday, February 19th, 2017 – Brooklyn**

12:30 p.m.

Brooklyn Conservatory of Music  
58 7th Avenue, Brooklyn

1:00 p.m.

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

**TEAMS ATTENDING**

Candy Rapper VSOP; Boston, Massachusetts  
Charm City Rapper; Baltimore, Maryland  
Cutting Edge Sword; Washington, DC  
Dapperapper; Boston, Massachusetts  
Half Moon Sword; New York, New York  
Go Figure; Princeton, New Jersey  
Orion Longsword; Boston, Massachusetts  
Pocketflyers; Boston, Massachusetts  
Still River Sword; Boston, Massachusetts  
That Long Tall Sword; Northampton, Massachusetts

**ABOUT HALF MOON SWORD**

Half Moon Sword is a New York 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 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.*

-30-