



Half Moon Sword **Traditional English Sword Dancing**

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

THIRTY-THIRD ANNUAL NEW YORK SWORD DANCE FESTIVAL
TO BE HELD FEB. 17-18, 2018 IN NEW YORK CITY

The 33rd Annual New York Sword Dance Festival will be held in New York City, on Feb. 17-18, 2018. 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)

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 or call 917-689-4372. You may also check the team Web site at www.halfmoonsword.org, or contact the team at halfmoonsword@gmail.com

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE FOR THE 33RD NEW YORK SWORD DANCE FESTIVAL
Saturday, February 17th, 2018 - Manhattan and Brooklyn

1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.
Seward Park Library
192 East Broadway, Manhattan

1:00 p.m.
Park Slope Library
431 Sixth Avenue @ 9th Street, Brooklyn

1:30 p.m.
Harry Belafonte-115th Street Library
203 West 115th Street @ 7th Avenue, Manhattan

3:00 p.m.
Jefferson Market Public Library
425 6th Avenue @ 10th Street

3:30 p.m.
Museum of the City of New York
1220 Fifth Avenue at 103rd Street, Manhattan

(more)

33rd Annual New York Sword Dance Festival (Add 2)

Sunday, February 18th, 2018 - 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

1:00 p.m.

Berg'n
899 Bergen Street, Brooklyn

GRAND FINALE

2:30 p.m.

Brooklyn Waldorf School
11 Jefferson Avenue, between Claver Place and Franklin Avenue, Brooklyn

TEAMS ATTENDING

Bubble Rapper; Boston, Massachusetts
Charm City Rapper; Baltimore, Maryland
Dapper Rapper; Boston, Massachusetts
Griggstown Lock, Princeton, New Jersey
Guyz with Tiez, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Half Moon Sword; New York, New York
Orion Longsword; Boston, Massachusetts
Pocketflyers; Boston, Massachusetts
Sligo Creek Sword, Washington, D.C.
Still River Sword; Boston, 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.