

 Nova Scotia
 Contra Dance Festival
 Sept. 27 - Oct. 3, 2015
www.contrafest.ca
A Stop on the CDSS Centennial Tour



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For more information about the Contra Dance Festival visit www.contrafest.ca

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The contra dance clubs in Halifax, Nova Scotia are enthusiastically planning for the CDSS Centennial Celebration and Community Residency Tour

The contra dance clubs in Halifax, Nova Scotia are one of seven committed groups across the United States and Canada awarded a community residency as part of a Centennial Tour by the arts and education organization the Country Dance & Song Society (CDSS), a national leader in promoting participatory dance, music and song that have roots in English and North American culture. This residency is part of a North American tour of community residencies by CDSS as part of their Centennial in 2015.

The two local clubs, Contra Times Dancers and Halifax Contra Dances, are collaborating to organize and host the Halifax stop on the Centennial Tour, which is scheduled to take place September 27 to October 3, 2015. The week-long "Nova Scotia Contra Dance Festival" will include a combination of educational workshops, outreach, and community dance events.

The Country Dance and Song Society was founded in 1915 in Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, New York City, and Pittsburgh by Americans inspired by the work of English folk song and dance collector Cecil J. Sharp. Four years earlier Sharp helped found the English Folk Dance Society in London, and CDSS began as a branch of that organization. Sharp wrote home to England: "The people (in America are) really most enthusiastic." Over the next 25 years, CDSS's interests in the American versions of the English traditions grew and in 1940 the groups in the U.S. merged, and reorganized as the Country Dance Society; in 1967, "and Song" was added to the name.

CDSS believes in the joy that participatory dance, music, and song bring to individuals and communities. Within the United States and Canada, they educate, support, and connect participants in these living traditions, and advocate for the vitality and sustainability of these art forms. CDSS has a membership of 3,000 individuals and families and 300 affiliate groups across the U.S., Canada, and 15 other countries. The dance forms CDSS supports include English country, traditional American square and contra, morris and other English ritual dances, and Appalachian and English clogging. Musical forms range from 17th-century dance melodies and traditional Scottish, Irish, and English jigs and reels, to the songs and tunes from Appalachia and the New England regions.

“The local contra dance clubs offer our communities a place to connect and engage in participatory dance and music,” said Dottie Welch, from Contra Time Dancers. “We are excited to have the Country Dance & Song Society come to our community to help us develop skills and strengthen our organization thus ensuring that this fun, friendly, healthy and multi-generational activity will continue to prosper.” The public is invited to participate in several contra dance events during the week of September 27 to October 3, 2015. Watch our website for more information about specific details.

“The CDSS Centennial Tour is the first project in the organization’s history implementing the community residency model as a means of connecting with and supporting our members,” said Pat MacPherson, CDSS’s Director of Education. “What we learn through the experience of working with the Tour communities will add to our capacity to better support our communities in the future,” added Nils Fredland, Tour Manager. “It is the hope of CDSS that, through partnering with Tour communities, they will feel the full range of support that we offer, in a very direct and visceral way. As a result, we hope they will feel able to do more than just survive; we hope they will thrive!” explained Rima Dael, Executive Director of CDSS, “What better way to celebrate CDSS's 100 years of dance, music and song than ensuring that these living traditions continue for future generations.”

For more information about the Country Dance & Song Society, visit www.cdss.org or contact Caroline Batson, Director of Communications at caroline@cdss.org or 413-203-5467.

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To learn more about the contra dance clubs in Halifax visit:

[Contra Time Dancers](#) and [Halifax Contra Dances](#)

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