

Performance Details

A typical performance will involve a team of 12 - 15 people, and we can provide smaller displays with 6 or 7 performers.

Our full continuous performance lasts up to 50 minutes, but we can also provide a number of shorter 10 -15 minute shows. The individual dances can also be performed as set pieces within other appropriate formats.

We perform indoors or open-air settings. We require a firm, even, dry dancing surface (not grass) of at least 5m x 5m, although 10 - 15 metres is preferable. We also need suitable changing facilities, but can provide a medieval tent if necessary.

We do not as a rule use amplification, preferring to perform in settings where this is unnecessary. Our instruments fall into the category known at the time as 'Loud'.

Engagements

Rose Moresk seek suitable engagements throughout the year at Festivals, Fayres, Historical Buildings, Courts and Castles.

Workshops and talks

Rose Moresk are keen to promote a better understanding of this element of our cultural heritage. We can provide workshops on the following topics:-

Moresk Dancing

Music for Moresk

Pipe and Tabor - beginners upwards

We have a supporting CD of our music and a Moresk Workshop dance manual (£15)

Members of Rose Moresk can give illustrated talks and formal presentations/papers about the Moresk, its history and context.

Contact Rose Moresk

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Rose Moresk

A Court Entertainment

It is 1499, imagine yourself a guest at a grand house or castle. It is a special occasion, there are important visitors from London and the host has promised entertainment 'fit for a king'. This will include the Moresk Dancers.

Much chivalry and heraldry will be evident as the players act out their mock battles, fighting to rescue maidens and win the hearts of fine ladies.

Each Moresk dancer is dressed in the colours of a noble knight, lepes and tornes, trying outdo the others and to impress the lady. At the end of each dance she will favour one lucky knight by presenting him with a rose. The rose may seem a simple gift, but it is laden with political and sexual symbolism.

The dancers may try to impress with their dancing prowess alone, but in some dances they have the opportunity to show their physical strength and fighting ability.

Which knight would you choose? The young Red Knight? The athletic White Knight? The nimble Black Knight? The swaggering Green Knight?

Does the cheeky Jester stand any chance against such noble competition?
Encourage the knight of your choice as he battles for supremacy.

What is the Moresk?

The early Moresk was an exotic entertainment presented at the Royal Courts across Europe. The Moresk first appears in English historical records in the mid C15th. Initially we have descriptions of Moresk decorations on tableware, then inventories and accounts of monies spent on Moresk costumes, and eventually descriptions of Moresk performances.

By 1500 the important landowners in the English provinces were keen to imitate the entertainment they had seen at the royal court. They trained their own teams of Moresk dancers.

Moresk was an antecedent of the Morris Dance, which still a thriving tradition in England.

Rose Moresk

Rose Moresk are a group dedicated to researching and recreating the Moresk to entertain and educate the public. Our first recreation is the courtly Moresk of around 1500.

Our performances are appropriate for both specialist and general audiences. They are entertaining and exciting to watch. The Moresk dances were performed as court entertainment with elements of drama and other dance forms creating a narrative. Rose Moresk strives to recreate this as accurately as possible and in a manner that is entertaining and accessible to Modern audiences.

Provenance

Our dances are based upon information from three main types of source material:-

Dance and music manuscripts
Various descriptions of performances , costumes and events
Iconography - carvings, engravings, etc.

In particular we have drawn heavily on the Abington carving and the Gresley and Arbeau manuscripts, as well as the research of Mike Heaney and Prof John Forrest.

The Rose Moresk members is comprised of both academics and performers, and we include professional dancers and musicians to ensure a performance of the highest quality and accuracy.

Style and content

A series of vigorous dances, in which the knights compete for the affections of the lovely ladies. The dances are linked by a dramatic and humorous narrative that helps the audience to understand the role and symbolism of the dances. The fool and/or jester provide interaction with the audience, drawing them into the story.

The style and the content of our performances is unique. We are the only group to our knowledge that have attempted an authentic recreation of the Moresk, and we to this end we have drawn together the best dancers and specialists in the field.

Dances

We have Five Moresk dances:

Two Lepeing Dances
A Grappling Dance
A Dart and Target Fighting Dance
A robust Jester's Dance

We also have a number of social dances of the period that involve both the men and women of the court.

Music

The Moresk was and is performed to the Pipe and Tabor, a medieval and renaissance one-man band. Rose Moresk has several taborers amongst its number. We also play other instruments of the period including the Rauschfief.

Costumes

Rose Moresk wear costumes based upon contemporary iconography using materials described in the historical recorded, in particular we use a lot of raw silk, brightly coloured using dyes of the period. The costumes are spectacular and incorporate many bells that make a distinctive 'moresk' sound.