

The Greatly Expanded CDSS Resource Portal: A Community Resource for All

By Emily Addison & Linda Henry

Are you a caller? Song leader? Ritual dance leader? Dance musician? Organizer? Dancer? Or do you play some other role in our shared traditions? We have a fantastic new resource for you: the CDSS Resource Portal!

www.cdss.org/resource-portal

What is the CDSS Resource Portal?

The Portal is a curated and carefully organized collection of hundreds of resources from throughout North America and beyond. Most of the resources are free and available online. It's like a 24/7 library but without due dates or late fines!

The original CDSS Resource Portal was launched in September 2018 as a support for dance organizers. Our new greatly expanded Portal now provides additional sections for all the primary players in our network. This includes:

- Singers and song organizers
- Ritual dancers and organizers
- (Social) dance organizers
- Callers
- Educators (in both classroom and community roles)
- Dance musicians
- (Social) dancers

Why have we created the Resource Portal?

The goal of the Portal links right back to the CDSS mission: *To connect and support people in building and sustaining vibrant communities through participatory dance, music, and song traditions that have roots in English and North American culture.*

We are aware that members of our network are constantly looking for support to help their practices, activities, and communities thrive. We see this through feedback we receive in surveys, phone calls, and emails fielded by our Community Resources Manager, and through the outreach work of the CDSS Executive Committee.

We created the Resource Portal to help meet these needs. We are investing staff time to compile knowledge from individuals and communities, and then share that valuable knowledge back out in a way that is easy to access. In certain instances, we are sharing expertise that we have in house. However, in most cases we look to our network as the experts. The Portal is all about making connections not only with information but also amongst individuals. Someone in California may have a helpful strategy to support someone in Saskatchewan or vice versa!

The Portal also illuminates where there may be holes in shared knowledge. We hope this will lead to new resources being developed and shared widely. See below for information about how to help us fill those gaps.

How the Portal is organized

The Portal is organized by key roles such as callers, singers, and song organizers, etc. (See above for a full list.) Within each section, you will find:

- Resources organized by topic. For instance, the caller section has headings such as prompting/delivering the calls, program planning, supporting new dancers, gender-free and positional calling, getting gigs and working with organizers, and MUCH more.
- Repertoire, including traditional song collections, links to dozens of websites with dances from various traditions, etc.
- Lists of both online discussion forums and in-person gatherings to help you connect with others who share your interest.
- And even more!

We have also added a section on the benefits of our shared traditions. This section contains articles, research papers, and government reports on the benefits of participatory dance, music, and song. We hope these resources spark personal interest and provide support to those advocating for our shared traditions. Perhaps you are applying for a state/provincial grant and need evidence on the benefits

of your activity? Or maybe you are advocating for space in a municipal building? Or maybe you are approaching politicians to encourage investment in participatory arts? This section of the Portal is designed to support you in this important work.

Next steps

The Portal contains hundreds of resources. However, to make the Portal a truly useful resource into the future, it needs ongoing input from YOU—our network. You and your communities each carry expertise that can benefit others. Maybe you want to write an article for the CDSS

News? Or organize a regional workshop and submit the summary notes? If you have ideas or resources you'd like to share, submit them online www.cdss.org/share-your-resource. If you have a topic but aren't sure about how it might fit into the Portal, fill out the form and add a brief note. We'll make sure to follow up with you.

In particular, we're looking for resources to add to the Singer, Ritual Dancer, and Educator/Classroom Teacher sections of the Portal.

We welcome your input on ALL of the above. Please email portal@cdss.org if you have any comments.

Connecting YOU to Community Resources

These two new columns will be ongoing additions to the CDSS News.

Highlights from community conversations on Shared Weight www.sharedweight.net

Here are few of the recent conversations:

- Song Organizers: Welcome and introductions for this brand new list that launched in early January 2020!
- ECD: Lots of sharing of dances that contain contra corners; maybe you're looking for some?
- Contra Callers: Discussion on the use of modern electronic music for contra dances.
- Trad Callers: A robust conversation on what makes community dances successful, plus tips on how to lead a successful ONS (one night stand) for parents and kids in a school setting.

Also...

In early December, caller Alex Deis-Lauby posted:

I left my cards for tonight on my kitchen table and brought only the ones I don't need! I found all online except:

-Colliers Daughter

-Wooing Mairi

-News from Tripoli

If you have those, could you send them my way please? And I chipped a tooth. So if you know a dentist in Poughkeepsie, see if they want to dance tonight.

The ECD list didn't have any dental recommendations, but Carmen Giunta responded to Alex's request for the dances within seven minutes of her post. What a community!



Highlights from the CDSS Resource Portal www.cdss.org/resource-portal

Resources in the Portal to get excited about:

CDSS Starter Kit for Folk Song Organizers

Created by Julia Friend and Nicole Singer, this resource outlines key considerations when launching a new sing, including creating a vision, finding a venue, publicity, clarifying the structure and flow of your events, and tips on facilitation.

Roy Dommett's Morris Notes—Online Edition

Edited by Dr. Anthony Barrand, this collection contains extensive notes regarding various morris traditions. It also includes articles on related topics such as playing music for morris, clowning in morris, sport injuries, and more!

A Musician's Guide to Contra Choreography

Written by Andrew VanNorstrand in 2019, this resource provides fantastic advice for dance musicians on what they need to know about contra choreography and how that relates to the music they play. The handout also includes tips on working with callers, as well as considerations for starting and ending sets.

Do you know of resources that would be great to add to the Portal? Please submit your resources via:

www.cdss.org/share-your-resource