

Booking and Working with Contra Dance Talent

Hiring bands and callers

- Define what kind of caller and band you want based on the vision of your series.
- Find new talent: references and research.
- Nurture new talent: What kind of feedback system do you have in place.
- The hiring calendar: How far in advance to start, do you hire for the entire season at one time (what makes sense for the frequency of your dance), are you open to traveling talent asking far in advance.

Information to give performers

- Payment structure: What works for you and is fair to the performers (based on number of performers, based on number of performers with a cap, based on local vs traveling, based on special arrangement: band or caller getting more).
- Basic facts: Location, what type of dance (zesty urban, community contra, family friendly, country contra); dates and times; your contact info (email and phone).
- Callers: Dancer experience level, age range, expected attendance numbers, do you have an introductory workshop, who teaches that.
- Bands: Sound set up (who brings sound equipment: you or performers, do you have a sound man, do you provide a piano).
- Do you need a contract or just a detailed confirmation letter? Details: Where, when, sound equipment details, hall opening times, driving directions, parking, contact info for person hiring and for person in charge the night of the dance.
- Last minute problems: Weather, illness, travel snafus.
 - Weather cancellation policy;

- What do you want your attitude to be w/ inconvenienced performer;
- What responsibility do you have to the dancers;
- Resources for finding replacements.

Communicating with band and caller during dance

- Issues you might approach the caller with (and how do you do this): Basic announcements, safety notifications (building space or behavioral), appropriate programming (beginners just walked in, please teach more, cue more), band is too fast or slow.
- Sound issues: The importance of a good sound system and sound engineer in getting a stellar performance from the band!
- Understanding the performers' perspective: What is helpful communication from you, what is annoying (helpful hint: pay them in a timely fashion).

When in doubt, use your resources—contact other organizers!