

MWCSC Music & DJ Policy

Approved by board 3/22/16

Music Type

Inspirational music is crucial to the dancer's enjoyment during a dance. A DJ's number one goal is to keep people out on the floor dancing and having a fun time.

Club DJs shall provide a mix of different genres of music (such as blues, pop, rhythm & blues, country, rock, hip-hop, etc.) in a variety of tempos and styles to satisfy diverse tastes. Music should also come from various time periods, with a heavy emphasis on recent music (from the last 5-10 years).

Tempo guidelines for WCS dictate that most music should be between 90 and 120 BPM, and is discouraged from being below 85 or above 125 at our club dances.

Finally, music played should be within the "level" of the club (for instance, avoid songs with drastic tempo changes or complicated rhythms).

Dance Type

Since we are a West Coast Swing club, the majority (~80%) of the music at our regular events shall be West Coast Swing, but it is also important to provide opportunities for people to dance to other popular types of dance.

Alternative dances approved by the board include Country Two Step, Nightclub Two Step, Waltz, and Hustle. (Note: other dance types are welcome if approved in advance by the MWCSC music coordinator). In the case of Hustle music, this can be satisfied by playing a dedicated Hustle song in the alternate slot, or it can be a "Swustle" during the WCS slots (it doesn't count toward the 20% in this case).

We suggest that DJs rotate West Coast Swing songs with alternate dances, with similar guidelines on varied style/tempo/etc. as suggested for WCS music. Typically in order to meet the 80/20 split, a DJ should play 4 WCS songs followed by an alternate song (then repeat), though this is not a strict requirement. Playing two alternate songs back-to-back is highly discouraged.

If an alternate dance type was taught as part of the dance event (for example, Country Two Step), then the first social dance of the dance event should be for that alternate dance type, and most of the alternate dances at that event should be of the type taught for the lesson. Special attention should also be paid to what alternate lesson is being taught in the concurrent lesson series; for instance, if there is a Hustle lesson series going on, more Hustle music should be played at dances during that time period.

Special events may be subject to different rules regarding alternate music. This shall be defined by the board or the coordinator of the special event dance when it is first organized. If nothing specific is defined, the above rules shall apply. Club advertising for special events should specify what types of dances will be played, and roughly in what proportions, if the mix is non-standard.

Announcements

The DJ might be asked to make announcements for the club or to advertise special deals for the event venue. If the DJ is not making the announcements, they are expected to assist with pausing the music and operating the microphone (if appropriate) for whoever is doing so.

The DJ should coordinate with the dance coordinator regarding special songs, such as mixers, and work to coordinate them smoothly. The DJ might be responsible for announcing these as well.

The DJ should announce the last song of the dance.

Music & Music Playback Equipment

The club's music library is managed by the club music coordinator, a member of the board. This person is in charge of legally obtaining new music and distributing music to club DJs on a regular basis. The club treasurer will reimburse the music coordinator for new music purchases after being provided with receipts. Other DJs may make suggestions to the music coordinator for purchase, and may also be eligible for purchase reimbursement, subject to the music coordinator's approval.

Music played at a dance does not have to come entirely from the club library, but neither should the DJ ignore the great resource that the library is. Dancers like to hear new songs, and they like to hear known favorites as well. As such, at least 50% of the songs played at a dance shall be from the club's library. The music coordinator has authority over songs that are allowed to be played at a dance (for instance, if a particularly bad song is played, the music coordinator has the right to tell all DJs that the song is off limits in the future). Appeals of this policy can be brought to the board as a whole.

DJs should come prepared with a playlist for the dance and/or be actively managing a playlist throughout the dance. In either case, DJs are expected to be flexible with their playlist. The club often has special dances (like a mixer) that require DJ involvement and appropriate music selection. DJs also should make appropriate changes to their playlist if dancers are not staying involved and on the dance floor due to the music (recall the "number one goal" from the first paragraph above!). DJs should also be prepared to play appropriate music for pre-dance lessons when requested (generally very slow, uncomplicated music with a very clear beat).

DJs typically provide their own playback equipment (laptop computer, tablet, MP3 player, etc.) but may inquire of the music coordinator for assistance if they cannot or wish not to do so.

If the dance venue does not have appropriate amplification equipment available, the music coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the club sound system will be present and setup at such events.

The DJ is responsible for setting and maintaining an appropriate volume level at events, though the board has the overriding authority in this manner if the DJ is not doing so.

Any DJ with questions about equipment, especially venue equipment, should inquire of the music coordinator for help, or the dance coordinator if the music coordinator is unavailable.

Music Requests

The club has a policy that allows anyone to make a song request. The club will provide a method for dancers to make a request (typically a small dry-erase board near the DJ station), which is the preferred method, or a dancer can verbally request one of the DJ. The DJ should periodically check the request board throughout the dance. The DJ should make an effort to play requested songs, but it is ultimately up to DJ discretion. The DJ can use

discretion in not playing songs that do not meet club requirements, are inappropriate, or are simply bad dance songs. The DJ may, at their option, announce that a particular song is a request when played. Finally, there can only be so many requests fulfilled at one event, and it is up to the DJ to determine how many get played and when.

If requests are made of songs that the club does not have, the DJ can send the request to the music coordinator for consideration, and then perhaps play it at a future dance. The DJ also is allowed to look up the new song on the spot, decide if it's worthy of being played, and play it, if they wish.

DJ Leeway

It is understood that during any particular dance event, discretion in the type of dances being played may be needed. For example if you play a Nightclub Two Step, and no one goes out to dance, then you probably should not play another Nightclub Two Step at that dance event. If the dancers present only know West Coast Swing, then feel free to deviate from the alternative dance type rotation and play mostly West Coast Swing dances. From beginning to end of any dance event, as people arrive or leave, the DJ may also need to vary the dance types. A good DJ will observe the dancers, and within limits, use their discretion to determine how to get the most participation out of the potential dancers present at any given time during the dance event.

DJ Scheduling

The MWCSC music coordinator is responsible for scheduling regular DJs in a fair and consistent manner and entering the schedule on the club calendar. Schedules should be set at least two weeks (preferably four weeks) in advance of the event. Special consideration will be given for selecting the DJ for the monthly dance and other special events, as often the visiting pro elects to be the DJ (and they will generally get priority). DJs with a conflict shall contact the music coordinator (or another DJ to arrange a direct replacement or swap) with as much advance notice as possible. If a direct DJ-to-DJ change is made, the music coordinator shall also be made aware of the change.

Becoming a DJ

Any club member interested in DJing for a MWCSC event should contact the music coordinator. The music coordinator might request further information, such as a sample playlist, for consideration. In any case, a new person who is granted permission to DJ an event is doing so on a trial basis, and is not necessarily going to be placed in the regular DJ rotation until approved by the music coordinator. The music coordinator will also supply the new DJ with a copy of the current club library of music when appropriate.

An existing DJ that is not living up to club standards may be asked by the music coordinator or club president to improve their performance. If they do not improve in a reasonable amount of time, the music coordinator might elect to remove the DJ from the regular rotation. Appeals of enactment of this policy can be brought to the board as a whole.

About This Policy

This policy is maintained by the club music coordinator. All changes (other than clerical errors) are to be voted upon and passed by the board as a whole (a majority vote will suffice).

For further questions on these policies or anything related to club music and DJing, please contact the club music coordinator or any member of the board.