

# **MWCSC Music & DJ Policy**

*Revised August 2018*

## **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, R&B, country, rock, EDM, 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 3-4 years).

Tempo guidelines for WCS suggest that most music should be between 90 and 120 BPM, and is discouraged from being below 80 or above 125 BPM 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). Remember we want to encourage beginner as well as advanced dancers.

Most importantly, music should be selected to please the crowd present, and a DJ is expected to adjust playlists as needed to keep dancers dancing.

## **Dance Type**

Since we are a West Coast Swing club, the vast majority (75-100%) of the music at our regular events shall be West Coast Swing, but we also 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 or a particular event coordinator). In terms of which of these dance styles to play, a variety is encouraged, but the popularity of each varies over time and the DJ should play accordingly. Similarly, the ratio is also not set strictly by this policy — the DJ should adapt to the interest level of the dancers at any given dance. For guidance on current club trends, contact the MWCSC music coordinator.

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, a DJ should play several WCS songs followed by an alternate song (then repeat). Playing two alternate songs back-to-back is highly discouraged.

If an alternate dance type was taught as part of the dance event, 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. The percentage of those alternate songs throughout the event should also be increased appropriately. Special attention should also be paid to what alternate lesson is being taught in the concurrent lesson series (if any); 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 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 whomever 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 or their designee). 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. The club music coordinator is also responsible for maintaining all club-owned DJ equipment (such as the sound system) in a responsible and timely manner.

All music played at club dances shall be legally purchased and licensed, either by the club or by the DJ. This explicitly prohibits using services such as Spotify and YouTube, which do not grant a license for music playback for non-personal use. If you have questions about a specific playback service or scenario, please discuss it with the club music coordinator prior to its use at a club event.

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 shall come prepared with a playlist for the dance and/or be actively managing a "live" playlist throughout the dance. In either case, DJs are expected to be flexible with their playlist. The club often has special songs (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 (typically a laptop computer) but may inquire of the music coordinator for assistance if they cannot or wish not to do so. Using a smartphone, MP3 player, or other similar device is highly discouraged, as they can be less reliable, and it is more difficult to adjust playlists "on the fly". DJs using cloud-based storage services are expected to come prepared to play music in "offline mode", as Internet connectivity is not guaranteed, and thus can result in a poor (or non-existent!) public playback experience. Please remember that services such as Spotify are prohibited.

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 music coordinator & other board members have 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. [Deleted section about club providing the whiteboard for written requests] 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.

### **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 just West Coast Swing songs. 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. Scheduled DJs that are unable to perform duties due to a last-minute emergency are expected to contact the music coordinator and/or event coordinator immediately and make every effort to find a substitute.

### **Becoming a DJ**

Any club member interested in DJing for a MWCSC event should contact the music coordinator. The music coordinator may 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 may

elect to remove the DJ from the regular rotation. Appeals of enactment of this policy can be brought to the board as a whole.

### **DJ Compensation**

A club member handling DJ tasks will be compensated according to the club's Volunteer Rewards Policy. A professional DJ or visiting dance pro handling DJ tasks will be paid according to their contract, or \$25 per event if no contract or agreement is otherwise entered.

### **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, pursuant with the club bylaws.

*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.*