



ASDC DJ Standards, Principles, Requirements, Recommendations and Music Guidance

INTRODUCTION

The ASDC is a non-profit organization which promotes West Coast Swing (WCS) dancing to the community. The music presented at ASDC sanctioned events aims to service all members of the club regardless of age, sex, or race. WCS music has fundamental elements, components, characteristics, and attributes which are conducive to WCS and its continuous evolution. The value added by a Disk Jockey (DJ), versus simply queuing music on modern technologies, is that the DJ will have proficient knowledge, skills, and abilities regarding West Coast Swing, WCS music selection, modern DJ playlist technologies, have good discrimination capabilities regarding music requests, and to know when to ask the ASDC Board of Directors (BoDs) for advice on music guidance.

The ASDC is working towards modernizing all aspects of the club; most importantly the music played at ASDC dances, classes, workshops, and other events. The ASDC has set as its standard the National Association of Swing Dance Events (NASDE) reference model. The ASDC DJ Standard will be to model itself after the practice that is exemplified by highly regarded national West Coast Swing Disk Jockeys (DJ's) who DJ for NASDE events.

Principally DJ's need to prepare playlists which are the most conducive for West Coast Swing, make the experience a positive one, to be well behaved, and be respectful of the event, its staff, and the dancers. Meeting these basic principles is a guarantee for success.

Sincerely,

The ASDC Board of Directors

PRIMARY REQUIREMENTS:

1. The Music:

- a. Must be purchased.
- b. Is required to be original in form and version that is well known, or an appropriate club mix.
- c. Must not contain:
 - i. Explicit Lyrics.
 - ii. DJ embellishments.
- d. Should be trimmed, if possible, to be approximately 3.5 minutes in length.

2. The Songs:

- a. Will not be spliced together to be played back-to-back.
- b. Will allow for a WCS dance to be structurally complete.
- c. Will be played so that West Coast Swing dancers:
 - i. Have a clear WCS beginning.
 - ii. Have a clear WCS ending.
 - iii. Are not interrupted.

3. The DJ:

- a. Will not use the DJ opportunity:
 - i. To talk to him/herself, the audience, or the dancers while dances are taking place.
 - ii. To promote him/herself, or their other venues.
 - iii. Announce the song list.

(A playlist may be published instead of verbal announcement).

- b. Will not disrespect the establishment.
- c. Will thank everyone for the opportunity to DJ before DJ'ing.
- d. Will thank everyone when finished DJ'ing.

DJ REQUIREMENTS:

1. Must be an experienced (>6 months) WCS Dancer.
 - a. Understands and can demonstrate tension-compression and core body lead.
 - b. Understands staccato and legato choreography.
2. Must use modern Digital DJ Methodology:
 - a. Digital download subscriptions.
 - b. Commodity grade laptop and DJ software.
 - c. Detect and document the Beats Per Minute (BPM) of the music.
3. Playlists
 - a. Playlist content should be aligned with that which is played at the NASDE WCS events.
 - b. Will play a mixture of music content that roughly approximates what is modeled in the Music Guidance section.
4. Will accept and play appropriate member requests.
 - a. Members will make requests with the ASDC Music Request Form.
 - b. The request forms will be collected by the ASDC.
5. Prior to an event the DJ will perform the following checklist:
 - a. Understand the intent of the event. Social, competitive, performance, regional, etc...
 - b. Study the room, the teachers, and the participants.
 - c. Check the electronic equipment, and understand the connection layout.
 - d. Facilitate a smooth transition as needed from DJ to DJ.
 - e. Acquire music from teachers as needed ahead of time and double check it.

RECOMMENDATION

DJ's will be provided a copy of a well-known easy-to-read book on music structure. It is recommended that DJ's understand the basics of music rhythm and understand the structural differences between genres of music, and have a clear understanding the following terms:

1. Tempo
2. Rhythm
3. Dynamics
4. Crescendo
5. Staccato
6. Legato
7. Melody
8. Phrase
9. Resolve

Music Guidance

The selection of WCS social dance music

1. Should inspire dancers.
2. Be conducive to WCS.
3. Be engaging and not challenging.
4. Form the connection between DJs and Dancers.
5. Will be comprised of the following range of music:
 - a. Tempo ranging between 88 - 120 BPM but predominately centered around 95-105 BPM.
 - i. As time passes the statistical distribution of BPM will be more easily analyzed with documented playlists.
 - ii. Exceptions for choreographed and performance dances.
 1. Example: Flash MOB: Usher, DJ got us Fallin in Love: 127bpm.
 - b. 4/4 Syncopated rhythmic structure where the normal upbeats on 2, and 4 are stressed as downbeats, also known as the Backbeat.
 - c. For roughly 3 hours worth of music from 7pm-10pm.
 - i. DJ for about 180 minutes, minus time for announcements, birthday dances, etc.
 - ii. With songs averaging 3.5 minutes
 - iii. For approximately 50 songs play:
 1. 1 Two-Step
 2. 1 Waltz
 3. 1 Night Club Two-Step
 4. 1 Hustle
 5. No more than 4 emerging WCS song potential candidates.
 6. The following types of music can be played at roughly these percentages:
 - a. Pop WCS music regardless of genre and age of music ~ 40%
 - b. R&B ~ 40%
 - c. Blues ~ 10%
 - d. Alternative ~ 10%
 - e. Rock ~ 1%
 - f. Country ~ 1%
 - g. Big Band/Swing (ECS) ~ 1%
6. The Playlists will be structured in the following format:
 - a. 7-8pm
 - i. This is considered the time to play music to encourage beginners, however the music should be inspiring, engaging, and entertaining to beginners and more advanced dancers.
 - ii. The following list of music represents a model and prototype of the characteristics of the music that are appropriate to play during the 7-8pm time. The playlist is only a model and is not necessarily meant to be used.
 - iii. Sweet Spot Characteristics:

1. Clear beat structure from the beginning, which continues throughout the song, is uninterrupted, and has an even syncopated back beat on counts 2 and 4 of 4/4 rhythm.
2. The triples of the beats are even, and not swung.
3. There are no major breaks.
4. The beat and pulse of the music, during what appear to be minor breaks, are actually carried by other musical elements, or by modulated voicing, instead of by percussion instruments.
5. The recommended average length of the song is 3.5 minutes and songs should be trimmed if possible at appropriate points in the music.
6. The recommended Beat Per Minute range is 92-117 BPM with an average of about 105 BPM.
7. The music should be fun, entertaining, inspiring, and have very few challenges.
8. The approximate percentages of genres that should be played are 40% Pop, 40% R&B, 10% Alternative, and 10% Blues.
9. The average age of the playlist may be in the range of 7 years old; more current and less frequently older.

Name	Artist	Album	Genre	Time In Min	Year	BPM			
Because Of You	Ne-Yo	Because Of You	R&B	4.43	2007	110			
Billie Jean (Single Version)	Michael Jackson	Thriller	Pop	4.90	1983	117	Percentages of Genres	10 - Pop	45
Bright Lights Bigger City	Cee Lo Green	The Lady Killer	Alternative Roc	3.63	2010	109		8 - R&B	36
Chains	Tina Arena	Don't Ask	Pop	4.40	1996	92		2 - Alternative	9
Click Click Click	New Kids On The Block	The Block (Bonus Tracks)	Pop	3.73	2008	100		2 - Blues	9
Dizzy (Dizzy)	Katlyn Swanson	Dizzy	R&B	3.83	2010	107			
DJ Don't	Gerald Levert	The Best Of Gerald Levert (Amazon)	R&B	3.47	2010	102			
Do Your Thing	Stefanie Heinzmann	Masterplan	Pop	2.42	2009	100	Average Year		2004
Family Affair	Mary J. Blige	No More Drama	R&B	4.00	2002	93			
I Want You	Savage Garden	Savage Garden	Pop	3.87	1997	106	Average Duration in Min		4
If You Want Me To Stay	Etta James	Life, Love & The Blues	Blues	4.00	1998	101			
I'm On Your Side	Keb' Mo'	Martin Scorsese Presents The Blues	Blues	3.65	2003	109	Average BPM		105
In My Head	Jason Derulo	Jason Derulo	Pop	3.30	2010	110	BPM Range		92-117
Juicy	Better Than Ezra	Before The Robots	Alternative Roc	3.88	2005	102			
Love Sex Magic	Ciara featuring Justin Timberlak	Love Sex Magic	R&B	3.67	2009	107			
Nobody	Ne-Yo	Year Of The Gentleman	R&B	3.12	2008	114			
One Step At A Time	Jordin Sparks	Jordin Sparks	Pop	3.42	2007	102			
Spotlight	Jennifer Hudson	Jennifer Hudson	R&B	4.17	2008	109			
The Way I Are	Timbaland	Shock Value	Pop	2.98	2007	115			
Undercover Agent For The Blues	Tina Turner	Foreign Affair	Pop	4.00	1989	97			
Wanted	Jessie James	Jessie James	Pop	3.07	2009	110			
When Something Is Wrong	Joanna Cotten	Joanna Cotten	R&B	3.88	2009	95			
			Averages =	3.72	2004	105			

b. 8-9pm

- i. This music can be more complex, include more apparent breaks, and include more complex rhythmic and tempo structures.

c. 9-10pm

- i. At this time of the evening some examples of emerging WCS music may be explored with more advanced dancers, and include more challenging songs that may have hidden beat structures that only advanced dancers will be able to understand.

ASDC MUSIC REQUEST FORM

USER REQUEST INFORMATION:

First Name:

Last Name:

Date:

DJ's Name:

Request Type (circle): Song Artist Genre Decade Other

Print a description of the request:

DJ Information:

Request is available: Yes No

Request is acceptable: Yes No

Request will need music editing: Yes No

Request was played: Yes No

ASDC Information:

Request Number:

References:

1. Skippy Blair on Music:

COMPETITION MUSIC OVERVIEW Skippy Blair© 8-22-02

http://www.swingdancecouncil.com/library/COMPETITION_MUSIC_OVERVIEW.htm

For more than 30 years, I have been talking about the "3-way" partnership - the leader - the follower - and the music. Sometimes the MUSIC can kill the partnership. That should NEVER be the case, in a competition. A standing ovation includes kudos for the music! Go back through your videos and find the standing ovations. Yes - the dance was great - but the MUSIC was something that inspired the dance. The dancers not only lived up to the music - but were inspired to go beyond the music and make it their own.

In other forms of dance competition, there is recognizable music that is considered "acceptable" for each particular dance. Given a level playing field, the top dancers will give a great show with great performances. West Coast Swing has the widest variety of music that is acceptable for West Coast Swing. Unfortunately, in an effort to impose very little restraints on the dance, we have neglected to place restraints on the MUSIC. Newer people on the dance scene should not be expected to have the perception to know the difference between good, bad, or **UNACCEPTABLE music for West Coast Swing**. More and more, our DJ's are studying the music they play and becoming experts in the field of swing music. In the meantime, until we all understand that **there is unacceptable music** - our dance is in trouble. A long time ago, everyone bragged that we could dance West Coast Swing to any music that played. That was a wonderful truth! That was also a time period before the onslaught of unacceptable music. The criteria for today's selection of dance music should be: **Only USE music that contributes to the dance** - not music that creates a challenge to perform. A competition requires three participants: A leader - a follower - and music that inspires them to dance. **The DJ and the Dancer are on the same team**. Together - they have the ability to produce a great performance. In social dancing - the DJ and the social dancer share a "relationship" that allows the dancer to get caught up in the music.

Today, there are still people who describe music by TEMPO - "It was too slow" - "It was too fast" - **Tempo does not identify the music**. It is the underlying rhythmic feel of Swing music that either tempts you to dance - (**sometimes insists that you dance**) - or - in some cases - suggests that you sit this one out. There is a "heart beat" deep in the rhythmic pulse of dance music. **It cries out to the dancer and brings them to their feet**. Good dance music does not make you scratch your head - or blink your eyes in an attempt to find out how to interpret what you hear. **Dance Identification walks hand in hand with MUSIC Identification. It really is time for everyone to acknowledge that music must be pre-selected and approved for competition**. There are hundreds of pieces of music - probably thousands - that are desirable for swing dancing. **A good start would just be to eliminate the impossible ones - just in case someone is tempted to play them**.

Many new dancers (and a few not so new) **have difficulty with music identification.** They ask how to tell a swing from a Cha-Cha or a Hustle. They wait until someone else dances - and then they get on the floor. **This is a period of learning** and eventually - if **someone tells them what the music is** - they will be able to distinguish one form of music from another. If no one ever tells them the difference - the new dancer can only assume that ALL music is swing music. Most advanced dancers can handle whatever happens and it won't interfere with their capabilities. **The beginner and intermediate dancer - is cheated out of experiencing the "thrill" of the dance - if they are not conditioned by music that encourages the "shaping of the dance."**

No matter how much you enjoy dancing swing to "**Love Potion #9**" - **it is still a Cha-Cha.** Of course a Swing Dancer can swing to it - It might even be one of your favorite songs - but **hopefully NOT in a competition.** In a competition - an accomplished Cha-Cha dancer's swing dancing would be compromised. An accomplished dancer feels the rhythm of the dance - in their body before their foot leaves the floor. In this scenario Cha-Cha music can become a handicap. It is NOT a handicap if you are not a Cha-Cha dancer. The point is that a dancer should not be penalized just because they are accomplished in more than one dance. **Swing music would never be allowed in a Cha-Cha or Hustle competition.**

The main issue at the moment - is having to dance to music that does not contribute to the dance. Some music does not invite great dancing - but more than that - **some music does not ALLOW great dancing.** Just as every follower loves to dance with a leader who creates a balance of good leads with a little leeway for personal interpretation - so the music should do the same. Good music should provide a background that allows unlimited variety of interpretation. It all boils down to: "**Good SWING music - SWINGS!**"

2. WCS: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_coast_swing

3. Example Playlists:

Contemporary: <http://www.streetswing.com/2modswg.htm>

Blues: <http://www.westcoastswingmusiclists.com/genrelists/wcsblues.html>