

## ***Music, Music, Music!!***

Selecting music for the dances we do on Tuesday nights is a big part of the overall preparation of the evening. All the RSCDS dances already have their own music, but many other dances which have been published independently, do not. Once music has been composed for a dance it is beneficial to use that same music every time it is danced. From this policy of dancing a particular dance to a set tune the phrase has been coined, "The Music Will Tell You!" This repetition of tunes with their dances helps with remembering the patterns of these dances. As well, dancers begin to be able to identify a dance when they hear its designated music.

Usually there are approximately four different tunes used for each dance. These tune selections are called "sets" and can be arranged in varying orders depending on the arrangement of the formations in the dance. In most cases the musicians try to begin and end the dance with the same tune. In Jimmy Shand's recording of Mairi's Wedding that we use here in Nanaimo, he plays the 'name tune' through 3 times, twice at the beginning, twice in the middle, and twice at the end of the dance, adding on a few extra bars each time to accommodate the 40 bars in the reel.

When we are unable to find the "right" music for a particular dance in our music library we must seek out tunes which are lively, uplifting, and work well with the phrasing of the dance. We are very fortunate to have a myriad of music at our disposal from which these selections can be made. The only time I vary from using the "name tune" or "correct music," is when our library version is of poor quality or lacks some of the necessary elements which make Scottish Country Dancing a pleasure. The music should be played well, have a pleasant sound, and a good beat with accents at the beginning of each phrase. This helps dancers recognize when a new phrase starts and keeps them on track during the dance. High quality, lively playing inspires dancers to participate more vigorously in the dance enhancing their pleasure. Why is it that in some dances we just let ourselves go and thoroughly enjoy the dance, while in others we are wondering how long it will be before it is all over? Of course, the answer is: The music. Well-played, beautiful music is a pleasure to listen to and to dance to.

Listen to the music as you dance!! Remember that you are dancing to the music and it is there to help you!!!

Happy Dancing To All,

**June McFadden**