

Our plea: Please include the music source on your cuesheets!
English¹ version – written by Gabriele Langer and Sabine Patzelt

(We wrote this article with all choreographers mind, but especially American choreographers. We want to provide some insights on the European perspective of this issue in order to further a better understanding of our problems and their solutions.)

Most of us know from experience that it is very time-consuming, tiring and frustrating to try to track down the right piece of music to a beautiful Round Dance choreography, especially when the record is no longer available. But often there is no real alternative if we don't want to deny our dancers an excellent dance and at the same time refuse to work with illegal pirated copies of music. Illegal or pirated music is a copy of a piece of music which has not been licensed by GEMA – the German performing rights organization² – or its counterparts in other countries like ASCAP or BMI in the United States. Pirated copies are not an acceptable solution to the problem. Using them creates legal problems, including fines, and trouble which none of us really needs. That leaves us the only alternative of a tiring search for a legal source (for example on CD) of the piece of music in question.

Keeping this situation in mind it is even more frustrating when it is common practice not to provide the necessary information on the cuesheets and not even on the Special Press Records themselves. At least information on the artist and the original title is needed to identify the piece of music and find an alternative source for it. Not having this information provided makes the search for an alternative source a lot more difficult and in many cases even impossible.

Another widespread practice of some American cuer colleagues constitutes often an insurmountable obstacle for us European cuers. Many American choreographers sell the music to their choreographies only as pirated copies on Mini-Disc³. Apart from being very expensive and often of poor quality, we are not allowed to use them anyway since they are illegal. This makes them practically worthless and useless for us. Therefore, although on the one hand we don't need to be sorry that we Europeans don't have the possibility to buy those pirated copies, on the other hand we don't have a chance to learn about the dances because they are mostly sold by the choreographers at festivals where they teach.

Since many of such pieces of music used for Round Dancing are not even published as Special Press records anymore, since many dances have a different name than the original pieces of music and since the choreographers often do not give any information about the origin of the music on their cuesheets, we European cuers have almost no opportunity to cue these dances and include them in our personal repertoire. As a result our dancers will not get to know these dances and are not able get enjoyment out of them. Unfortunately the choreographers themselves – through their practice of not providing the necessary information – hinder their dances from becoming known and popular and from being danced often in Europe. We feel that this is not only an unnecessary deprivation for the whole Round Dance community but also an unnecessary self-restriction of the choreographers who naturally have an interest in their dances becoming popular and their work being appreciated and valued.

And it would be so easy for the choreographers to change that and make all information on the origin of the music public on the cuesheet! This would enable all fellow cuers to buy the music legally in any part of the world anytime without forcing them to spent extra time on research. It would also make the use of the choreography independent of whether the Special Press Record is non-available or whether the choreographers are still active within the Round Dancing community.

¹ Our thanks goes to Susie Rotscheid, who has proofread the English version for us.

² Performing rights organizations like GEMA, ASCAP or BMI insure that the artists – songwriters, singers and bands – get paid for their work. To use pirated copies consequently means to rob artists of their income.

³ In this case the information on the cuesheet about the piece of music in question often looks like this: "Music: available from Choreographer on Mini-Disc", which is not very helpful.

To explicitly name the artist on the cuesheet is also a question of fairness. The artist makes with his music – as does the choreographer with his or her choreography – an important contribution to the dance as a whole. Without the work of the artist, the music, the choreography belonging to it would be almost worthless. It is correct and appropriate that the choreographer is named on the cuesheet to a dance because he has a right to get the credit for his work. But so does the artist of the piece of music belonging to it, which has inspired the choreographer to write the dance in the first place!

For these reasons we ask all choreographers to include all information concerning the music and the artist on their cuesheets so that this information is conveniently available to their fellow colleagues without asking. The information should be available to the choreographer at the time of cuesheet writing.⁴

It would be very sensible, helpful and desirable if in the future every cuesheet included the following information in addition to the information that is usually given on cuesheets.

- exact title of the original piece of music (this is absolutely necessary, especially if the title of the dance is different from the title of the piece of music), or a note when the name of the dance is the same as the original piece
- artist, singer, band or orchestra
- if possible title, label and (record) number of a CD (or Record), on which the original piece of music was published and can be bought; also: number of the Track on CD
- If the original piece of music has been changed or cut for the Special Press version or the version on Mini-Disc this should also be noted. For example: Is the music faded out earlier, has a piece been cut out or has the music been newly arranged (cut and put together in a different order)? The change made should be described as exactly as possible (example: Part B: measures 8-16 has been cut out the second time)
- length of the piece of music (example: 3:25 minutes)
- It would also be helpful if the title and the artist of the original piece of music was not only named on the cuesheet but also printed on the label of the Special Press record, too.

We would like to ask all choreographers again: please, include this information on your future cuesheets!

To dance a good choreography is a real pleasure and it would be a pity if the work of a whole generation of choreographers could not be used anymore just because the music – or to be more precise the information about the music – is no longer available. Detailed information on the cuesheet is the best way to provide for a lasting choreography. This way the dancers can get enduring enjoyment out of the dance, even after the records are out of press and the choreographers have retired from the active Round Dancing community and are therefore not available as provider of this information anymore.

We hope we have been able to provide some food for thought with our position and explanation of the situation and again make an appeal to all choreographers to provide all necessary information and by this support their fellow cuers in their work. We believe that this would be an important contribution to support, advance and promote our activity of Round Dancing and to allow it to grow and bring enjoyment to even more people. The goal of promoting Round Dancing lies in all our interests and unites all of us – choreographers, cuers and dancers – and it is worth of all our support!

⁴ It has happened to us, that we asked choreographers for information on the music to their dance and found out that even the choreographers didn't know anymore, how the piece of music on a Special Press record or a Mini-Disc has been cut, who was the artist and on which record or CD the original piece of music can be found. This shows that even with the choreographers such important information does get lost over time. This is another argument in favor of documenting the information on the cuesheet as long as it is still easily available.