

Music for Ballroom Dancing

When you think of ballroom dancing, you probably think of slow music being played by a violin. Centuries ago, your thoughts would have been very accurate. Ballroom dancing was originally performed to acoustic guitars, violins, and cellos. This kind of music was appropriate at the time, as most ballroom dances were slow and very precise. However, as time passed and ballroom dancing gained popularity, the music changed right along with the dances.

Gone are the days of the mellow acoustic strings; today, a variety of music is used in ballroom dancing. The music depends strictly on the type of dance being performed. In ballroom dancing, there are over ten traditional dances with many more variations, so obviously the music will be different for each one. Here is a look at some examples of music and songs appropriate for each dance style.

The paso doble is a Spanish dance that demonstrates the bullfighter's bravery and agility. Often, the woman represents the matador's cape. The paso doble is a very intense and dramatic dance, so the music selected should fit the scene. Most of the time, the music for this particular dance is instrumental, but fast-paced with a dramatic appeal. The Spanish culture should be kept in mind, so choose music with horns, maracas, and acoustic guitars.

The jive is a fun and upbeat dance that allows the dancers to express their careless personality. The moves are quick with lots of fast kicks and spinning or twirling of the woman. Most of the jive is performed in a stationery place and does not involve moving around on the dance floor. Elvis Presley's "Hound Dog" is a great example for the jive, as is the obvious song, "Born to Hand Jive". Any song that follows this kind of tempo is appropriate for the jive.

The quickstep is a combination of the swing and the jive. The steps are very quick and movements must be fast and concise. This dance is usually best performed to instrumental music. A couple of songs most commonly used for the quickstep are "Big Band", "Flash", and "Spoonful of Sugar". These songs have a cheery and upbeat tempo and have a 1940's dance club appeal.

The foxtrot is one of the most popular ballroom dances, although it is also one of the most difficult to learn. The foxtrot is a very smooth dance with fluid movements, and the movements are "slow, quick, quick, slow". This dance is considered to be elite and one of the most formal, so choosing music can be quite a challenge. Keep in mind that the music should not be very fast, but should follow along with the steps. Berlin's "Take My Breath Away" and Shakira's "Underneath Your Clothes" are excellent choices for the foxtrot.

Although not the last of the ballroom dances, the cha cha is a very lively and

even flirty style of dance. It is also fast-paced and combines a lot of hip action with quick footsteps. This dance is one of the easier styles of ballroom dance when it comes to choosing music. Shakira's "Whenever, Wherever" and Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire" are ideal songs for dancing the cha cha.