

Endangered Dances

Dear Choreographer! Dear Cuer! Dear Round Dancer!

We all know that cultural diversity is a highly valuable treasure worth of documentation and preservation. The cultural heritage of the round dance community - the many dances that we dance - is also worth of documentation and preservation. But dances - just like languages - can become endangered and die, when people stop actually using them. They die out even though there still may be documents around describing the language or dance in question (e.g. a dictionary, a grammar or in the case of a dance: a cuesheet).

In the process of researching and looking for original and legal sources of music to many interesting dances I had to find out that many dances are endangered (so to speak) to vanish from our culture.

The main reason dances are endangered is the simple fact that often the artist (name of singer or band or orchestra) and the original title of the piece of music is not provided on the cuesheet. Without that information it is hard or even impossible to find and buy the music elsewhere.

Even holding a special press record in your hands does not mean that you have the necessary information that a fellow cuer would need to buy the music: Often special press records are lacking information of original title and artist, too.

We have a real problem here:

- Special Press Records are of limited supply and get sold out fast.
- If one does not know original title and artist it is nearly impossible to find an alternative legal source of this music.
- Choreographers do get older, forget and eventually drop out of the activity. Their knowledge of the original source of their special press records gets lost with them. (I had cases where I asked choreographers for the title and artist of the original piece of music that they had used for their dance and special press record and even the choreographers themselves didn't know it.)

Something needs to be done about this problem. We need a change of mind and a change of action here. The original artist and original title should always be named on the cuesheet (long cues and preferably also on short cues)!

You can help saving endangered dances from vanishing out of our round dance culture. Please do so!

If you are a dancer:

If you like the piece of music of a particular dance please let the choreographer know about it and ask for the information on the music. This helps to make choreographers aware of the need for this information on cuesheets. Please encourage the choreographers you know to include artist and original title on their cuesheets.

If you are a cuer:

If you are looking for a certain piece of music and do not find the necessary information on the cuesheet please ask the choreographer for this information to make him aware of the problem he is creating for other cuers. And please ask him to provide this kind of information on his cuesheets from now on. Please share the researched information with other cuers!

If you are organising an event (Convention, special dance etc.)

or if you publish cuesheets:

Please ask teachers who present their own dances or who have their own cuesheets published by you to include the necessary information on the music into their cuesheets. Make them aware that not doing so causes many problems. Please only accept dances where the necessary information is made freely available on the cuesheet. Hopefully this will force the choreographers to change their practice for their own and the round dance community's good.

If you are a choreographer:

In behalf of the round dance community I ask you to help preserve your own dances as part of our cultural round dance heritage!

Please think about the following:

Maybe you have written a dance to a piece of music that has inspired you. And maybe on your cuesheet you do not give the name of the artist nor do you name a legal source (record or CD) where this music has been taken from. In order to be able to use your choreography a cuer needs to be able to get a legal copy of the music. In order to be able to buy the music, the cuer has to have enough information to find the music and to identify the right version. Please give cuers the opportunity to use your dance and the choice to buy a legal record or CD!

The pressing of a special press record is not enough to ensure a continuing life of a dance. Even though the special press record may be a legal pressing (ASCAP or BMI fee paid) it probably will be sold out fast. Once it is sold out the cuesheet is still available but the music is not because of a lack of information. If the cuesheet does not give a clue on where else to find the music a cuer either will give up looking for it right away or he otherwise has to invest a lot of

time on research not even being sure whether this will lead to success. Thus not providing information about the music on the cuesheet does endanger the life of a dance and wastes resources (cuers' time and efforts) that are needed in other ways to advance the round dancing activity (e.g. dancer education).

You can help

- by providing information on the music of the choreographies you've already written (e.g. updating and publishing your updated old cuesheets) and
- by providing all necessary music information on your cuesheets that you will write from now on.

Please understand that in Germany GEMA - our German counterpart of BMI and ASCAP - is very strict. We can only use legal music. Therefore to buy a special press record that is "for educational use only" (no BMI or ASCAP fee paid) is a somewhat shady matter and to use a copy of somebody else's record on minidisc is no option at all.

Apart from legal matters I also consider it an act of fairness to name the artist who has given us such inspiring music to choreograph and dance to. We should encourage cuers to pay these artists for their work by making it possible and easy for cuers to buy legal copies of the artists' music.

To include the artist and a legal source of music in the cuesheet also documents our best intention to compensate the artist for his work since it is a kind of advertisement for him. If all choreographers would do this this could further a good standing with the music industry. I personally would feel much safer to publish a cuesheet with artist and a legal source named than with a note like "music available on minidisc by choreographer" - which in a legal view really easily translates to "I freely give away illegal copies of music to anybody".

In order to promote your dances and ensure their long life and in order to make life easier for your fellow cuers I ask you to please include all available information on the artist and music on all cuesheets you write from now on!

The following information should be given on every cuesheet in order to give cuers the choice to buy a legal source of the music:

- Artist
- Original title of music (or information that the original title is identical to title of the choreography)
- At least one legal source of music (label and number of record other than special press or label, number, title of CD, number of track)
- Information whether the original version has been cut and edited for the special press version (and if yes how - for example: "measures x-y have been taken out", "fade out after measure z", or "not edited")
- (Also length of the piece of music would be helpful)

Please promote your own wonderful and interesting choreographies by providing this kind of information for your dances! It would be such a loss if so many beautiful dances do not get danced because of a lack of information. Please support the activity of round dancing by helping your fellow cuers getting the music to your dances easily and without unnecessary extra research effort!

Please also talk to your colleagues about this issue and try to convince them to include the music information on their cuesheets.

Information on endangered dances:

My name is Gabriele Langer and I am a cuer from Hamburg, Germany.

I've started to collect information on the music of older dances where the necessary information on the music is lacking on the fineprints. I make this information available to everybody on the internet:

<http://www.geocities.com/Colosseum/5624/nachweis.html>

If you have researched dependable information on the music of dances where this information is not given on the original cuesheet (finprint) you can send this information to me to be included in the list.

If you are desperately looking for information on the music of a particular dance and the choreographer cannot help you, you can let me know about this endangered dance and I will put it in my list - hoping that somebody else can provide this information eventually.

Thank you for your attention, understanding and help!
Let's keep dancing alive for a round world!

Sincerely,

Gabriele Langer (Hamburg, Germany)

GabrieleLanger@gmx.de