

## MUSIC — DEVELOPING THE SKILL OF PRE-CUING

(Mostly taken from later edits to the 1994 version of “Music as used by Callers”)

Most dancers can feel the beat of the music and they will instinctively want to move on the musical phrase. Callers can also feel the beat of music, and they will want to call on the phrase. Yet if the caller calls ON the phrase, then (because of reaction time) the dancers cannot also dance ON the phrase. The only solution is for the caller to call BEFORE the phrase arrives (much like a good round dance cuer cues), so that the dancers can dance WITH the phrase.

Dancers find it much more enjoyable, and much less tiring, to dance with the phrase. Remember, if you want the dancers to dance WITH the musical phrase, then you must deliver the call BEFORE the phrase starts.

All square dance music must have a recognizable downbeat to enable the dancers to easily find and dance on the musical phrase. That is the heavy beat of the music. A bass type of instrument in the orchestration characterizes it. The downbeat gives the dancers the feeling to move by. For the dancers to move on this strong beat, the caller must have already delivered the call BEFORE that downbeat arrives.

In order to be effective, a caller must deliver his calls three ways:

- 1) ON RHYTHM    2) ON PITCH (KEY)    3) BEFORE THE PHRASE

Today's choreography doesn't always allow the dancers a complete musical phrase for every call. But when we allow the dancers to dance with the phrase some or most of the time, the power of the music helps them move, we give the dancers a more enjoyable dance, and they will not become as tired from dancing.

Calling before the phrase really means allowing the dancers to move WITH the musical phrase. This is most often talked about in singing calls but is a technique we use in patter calling as well. Music is often written in 4 or 8 beat musical phrases. The execution time of most square dance calls is an even multiple of 4 or 8 beats. Therefore, callers can allow the dancers to dance with the musical phrase more often than not.

Use the following chart of 8-beat lines within 64-beat verses to figure out when to give the commands so that the dancers mostly begin to dance the calls on either beat 1 or beat 5.

1 _____	_____	_____	_____	5 _____	_Heads_	_Lead_	_Right_
1 _____	_____	_Veer_	_Left_	5 _____	_Chain_	_Down_	_the Line_
1 _____	_____	_____	_____	5 _____	_Two_	_Ladies_	_Chain_
1 _____	_____	_____	_____	5 _____	_____	_Forward_	_and Back_
1 _____	_____	_Star_	_Thru_	5 _____	_____	_Pass_	_Thru_
1 Allemande	_Left_	_____	_____	5 _____	_Right_	_and Left_	_Grand_
1 _____	_____	_____	_____	5 _____	_____	_____	Promenade

