

# Teachers' Association Scotland

## *Leaflet 1*

Discussion notes  
taken in 2007 on  
“What makes a good  
SCD Programme”

*Members discussed this topic in May 2007; below is a list of issues considered in preparing a good SCD dance programme.*

1. There should be roughly equal numbers of reels, jigs and strathspeys on each programme and no two consecutive dances should be in the same rhythm. The inclusion of a medley might be appropriate sometimes.
2. Programmes should contain as much variety as possible. Consideration should be given to:
  - a. Types of dance – longwise 2/3/4/5 couple sets and the occasional square set.
  - b. Popularity of dances – plenty of dances with familiar formations using a range of publications, with only a few new or unknown dances. When there are musicians playing it is a shame to spend time walking through more than one or two dances.
  - c. Formations – there should be a wide selection of different formations within the programme. Identical formations should not appear in consecutive dances particularly at the start and finish of a dance. An analysis of the dance should be made to examine the formations used, the number dancers in the set, and the length of the dances. The Pilling Aide-Memoire is helpful in checking for the overuse of certain formations.
  - d. A good mix of energetic and less demanding dances should appear bearing in mind the stamina / average age of the participants.
  - e. A mix old and new dances is good.
3. Consideration to the standard of dance by the participants, to suit beginners / experienced / or all abilities and ensure there is provision for all. Never neglect the less experienced dancers, nor select too many “mastermind dances” which tax the mind and the

body. Many think it a good policy to build up in complexity of dances in the first half and ease off in the second half of the programme.

4. Many recommend a start with an easy dance with very little or no setting – regard it as a warming up dance. Bands prefer to play in jig time initially and avoid the difficult reel tunes until they are warmed up.
5. Always finish with the evening and even the first half of the programme with a dance having a popular original named tune and in which most of the set are active in the last formation.
6. Consider the length of the break, the longer the pause the more important it is to start with a gentle relatively easy dance. After a long break a three couple strathspey might be appropriate.
7. Publicise the programme in advance and always give the reference to the dance devisor/publication.
8. The inclusion of certain dances will preclude others, for example: a programme could include the Eightsome or the Buchan Eightsome, the Foursome or the Shepherd's Crook.
9. Avoid having more than one 8x48 strathspey or too many short dances since it take longer to make up the sets than to do the dance. Keep the strathspeys which are only three times through to the second half of the evening.
10. Avoid two couple dances near the end of the evening unless they are done in three couple sets i.e. six times through. Avoid four and five couple dances near the end of the programme – they tend to leave more couples out if you are short of dancers. Three couple dances in four couple sets encourage as many people as possible on to the floor.

11. A programme devised around dance titles to illustrate a “theme” will generally not produce as good a programme as one purely based upon dance content.
12. Be courteous to the group teacher who should see the programme before it is published.
13. Extras should always be well known dances.