Suggestions and Tips on writing a Line Dance Step Sheet

1. Dance Name:
1:1 Choose a good name which reflects the style of the dance and a link or phrase from the song.
1:2 If possible search the Web to check that your chosen title has not been used before.
1:3 Remember that when someone is searching for your dance, it is better to have a unique title.
Placing punctuation in the title will make it more difficult for those searching for the script.
Examples: *Cowboy Cha Cha – Woolshed Waltz – Tulsa Slide*

2. Choreographer Name:
2:1 The name or names should be clearly shown.
2:2 Indicate your country - i.e. UK, France, Australia, USA, NZ
2:3 Add the date that the dance sheet was released - i.e. May 2007
2:4 Contact details of web address, email or phone number**.**
2:5 Where applicable add the version number if the sheet has been amended after the release.
This will help instructors identify the correct version of sheet.
2:6 Signing your final draft qualifies you as the author and that the sheet is deemed correct by you.
Example: *Choreographer: John Doe**, Sydney, Australia. Jan. 2012. Version 2 - john.doe@google.com*

3. Music:
3:1 Name the title of the Song, Artist and Album (CD).
3:2 Include the Beats Per Minute (BPM) of the music, and the total duration of the track (3:46)**.**
3:3 If the music is difficult to get, then include information as to how the song may be legally obtained.
3:4 If you have alternate music suggestions, include details of those too.
3.5 If the dance has a very long musical introduction, maybe suggest movements while waiting for the
dance to start, ie: clapping / shimmies to the music. Check for a shorter version of the song.
3.6 Music that is readily available will give your dance a better chance of survival than hard to find / out of
print music.
3.7 Check how many other dances and levels have already been choreographed to the music you intend
to use. The more dances choreographed to that level you intend to use, the less chance your dance
will get off the ground.
Example: *Music: Its now or Never by Chris Isaak. CD: Beyond the Sun – 127bpm (3:20) Available itunes*

4. Dance Information:
4:1 Nominate the number of walls (1,2 or 4) and the counts per sequence (wall) i.e. 32, 48, 64
4:2 Indicate if applicable if the dance is a phrased one. (the dance is phrased if it contains a tag(s), restarts,
or bridges).
4:3 Include the suggested Difficulty level – i.e. Beginner, Easy Intermediate, Intermediate or Advanced.
4:4 Add the style if its not already included in the Dance Title – i.e. Line Dance, Waltz, Cha Cha.
4:5 Indicate the direction that the dance rotates from wall to wall – i.e. clockwise (CW) or counter clockwise
(CCW)
Example: 4 *Wall 32 count Intermediate Line Dance - CCW*

5. Introduction & Start Position:
5:1When introducing the dance to the song, indicate a count or time or both as a place to start the dance.
This starting point is very important information, as starting in the wrong place of the song will
potentially offset any phrasing of the dance**,** especially when it comes to any Tags or Restarts. The
time is also useful to the instructor when the count is difficult to determine and when it is not so obvious
whether the dance is performed to the fast or slow beat.
5:2 Indicate also the initial start position of feet and where the weight is placed.
Example: *Intro: 32 counts (24 secs) Start on Vocals. Feet Together, Weight on Left foot*

6. The Section Headings:
6:1 Keep the headings brief as they are a quick guide only.
6:2 Use the descriptions of step groups in general use.
Display them as Bold or CAPITALS in order to be clearer for the reader & to distinguish the headings
from the main step instructions. i.e. Coaster, Sailor, Lock Step, Monterey, Shuffle, Pivot Turn
Example: ***Shuffle Forward, Step Recover, Coaster Back, Step Pivot***

7. The Step Instructions:

7:1 The steps are numbered, and the step numbers (representing the timing) should be separated by punctuation marks. This is usually by a comma or hyphen. – i.e. 3,4 or 3-4.

7:2 Where the dance has steps in between the main beats a '&' symbol is used.
Example: *3&4   Step instruction 3, Step instruction &, Step instruction 4*
In this case there are Three instructions which coincide with Three timing numbers.

7:3 Insert a "Tab" between the step numbers and the step instructions. This helps with clarity.
Example: *1,2   Step right to right side, Close left beside right*

7:4 Advise the reader regarding the direction they should be facing after each instruction involving a turn.
Example: *1,2   Make 1/2 turn to right, Step forward on left (6:00)*
The (6:00) is the clock position relative to the start wall for that sequence and is best added at the end of the line where the turn is mentioned. This will also assist the instructor in confirming they have executed the turn correctly and are facing the correct wall.

7:5 Nominate the end of the sequence i.e. Begin again, Start again, Repeat from the beginning.
This also segregates the main step instructions from any Tags, Bridges, Restarts or suggested finishes.

Step Variations / Options:

If there is a degree of difficulty in the dance, bear in mind not everyone will be able to execute all the steps as choreographed. If you choose to have a triple turn or complex step, offer a step variation option, i.e. shuffle, walk, rock/coaster. This ensures everyone can still enjoy the dance at their individual level.

8. Tags, Restarts or Bridges:

8:1 The instructions should show where in the dance they occur and on which wall or after which wall.

8:2 The reader should be instructed on what to do at the end of the Tag.
Example: Restart the dance from the beginning, or, continue from step 16.

Definitions

Tag: A set number of steps less than the total number of sequence (i.e 32 count dance). Added at the end of a sequence to fill particular phrasing in the song and normally consisting of up to 8 counts. If any more than 8 counts are involved in the phrasing maybe look at building them into a restart.

Restart: Where a nominated sequence is shortened at a given point to phrase with the song, before the sequence is started again from the beginning.

Bridge: Where a nominated sequence is interrupted at a given point to phrase with music, and then a tag is inserted before the sequence is continued to its nominated finish.

Retag: Where a nominated sequence is interrupted at a given point to phrase with music, and then a tag is inserted before starting the sequence again from the beginning.

9. Endings:

Some choreographers like to end their dances on the front wall. This sometimes involves a short sequence or modification of some steps to achieve that result. The steps should be described in the same way as the preceding main part of the dance. Remember that the script is often the only information the dancer has available, so make it as clear, precise and well presented as possible. This will all maximise your chance of the dance being adopted by the largest number of people.

In most cases, it may only get one chance from an instructor searching for new material for a class and have a selection of sheets to choose from.

Final Check List:

Check the dance script for spelling / timing and direction mistakes. Where possible ask others to check as well. Once you are happy with the final draft <u>Sign</u> the sheet as approved <u>and then</u> proceed to circulate.

Video The Finished Product:

Think about displaying your dance globally on the internet. This teaching tool obviously is not a practical option for everybody, but is an enormous aid in helping instructors decide immediately on whether to teach the dance based on the visual and audio demonstration. These videos are and will be your silent salesman in getting your dance recognized and performed.

If possible instruct / walk through the dance steps yourself as the choreographer, or use an instructor, group of dancers who can demo the dance. This visual and audio aid will lessen the chances of step misinterpretation. You will have access to a world wide audience which will give your dance a better chance of being seen or discovered.

Remember, the video is just a visual/audio guide allowing others the ability to quickly see if the music and style is to their taste, and to cross check, direction changes, flow, restart walls & tags. And of course, if those performing the video look as if they are enjoying it and having fun, then the dance is more likely to be embraced by those watching it.

Video editing should be as informative as possible, advising of… name of dance / choreographer / dance counts / number of walls / music / artist / with tags and/or restarts as they occur. Study other videos for ideas or examples. Once you are happy with the editing of the video, proceed to upload it to the internet. In time, with more experience in shooting and editing videos you will be able to fine tune your presentation into a smooth demo of your dances. However, at the end of the day a basic video is far much better than no video at all.

Suggestions on how to Promote Your Dance:

1. Post the dance on YouTube.
2. Email the video link & step sheet to as many instructors (National & International) as you know. Many workshop instructors are always looking for new material for upcoming workshops. (Remember to BBC all contacts to ensure their privacy). Don't forget to copy also linedance websites who are set up for dance sheet archives such as Copperknob, Yipee, Kick It and Aussie Dancesheets to name a few and line dancing magazines who also publish such as The Beat (NZ) and Linedancer Magazine (UK). Don't be offended or discouraged if your offer to the magazines isn't taken up every time. Its usually because they have limited space to publish in each edition and many scripts to choose from.
3. Participate in local or National Choreography competitions judged by well known and respected Choreographers & Instructors. This will give you great exposure as a choreographer and an opportunity to showcase your dance in front of many instructors who attend these events looking for new material.
4. Ask if you and your group can demo the dance at local socials. This is a great way to showcase your dance. Have your music available and signed dance scripts available for distribution if successful in your request.

I hope this has been of some help and guidance. I have put my best thoughts forward as a guide only to assist other choreographers and ultimately to make life easier for the instructors. These thoughts have come from many months searching the net and talking to a large selection of instructors who are struggling to understand some of the sheets being written today. It's not an easy thing to sit down and put your creative thoughts onto paper in a way that others may understand. I do think there are many ways of giving your sheet its best chance of being successfully adopted by a large audience and I hope I have been able to show how these suggestions will help. With the growing number of choreographers in the industry now and with strong marketing tools such as the internet to assist, a dance sheet usually only gets one opportunity to help sell your dance. It's appreciated that not all have access to the internet nor the confidence to become involved with it. Even more reason that your dance sheet must be clearly read and understood and contain as much information as possible without becoming too cluttered.