

Singing Call Techniques

by Tim Marriner

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Singing calls are one of the most versatile programming devices at a caller's disposal. They add balance, contrast, style, mood, and dance to the art of square dance calling. At this point, the caller is closest at being a performer entertaining in show business. Below are a few items to think about when working with singing calls.

What Singing Call Music Accomplishes:

- a. It can compliment or add contrast to patter calling
- b. It can project warmth, fun, and friendliness
- c. It can provide program balance between choreography and dancing
- d. It can add variety with multiple styles and rhythms
- e. It can set the mood of a dance
- f. It can enhance showmanship

How to Choose Music:

- a. Be genuine to you
- b. Be in your proper key and range
- c. Be danceable
- d. Be crowd pleasing
- e. Have a purpose
- f. Know where it fits in a program

Presentation:

- a. Choreography should fit the musical phrasing
- b. Instrumentation and voice carry the melody
- c. Use up-beat phrasing and syncopation
- d. Use vocal techniques to emphasize key words
- e. Tempo, bass, and treble adjusted as needed
- f. Balance vocals to the music for maximum effects
- g. Adapt the lyrics and choreography as needed
- h. Be aware of choreographic difficulty
- i. Be flexible enough to change figures
- j. Build the performance
- k. Know when to sing, talk, whisper or just let the music play

Like patter music, every singing call has a definitive purpose creating certain moods. It is important to determine that purpose and sing with qualities that help convey that meaning. Remember, this is not a karaoke performance merely singing the proper notes. It should be a heartfelt interpretation that conjures up real emotions to provide great entertainment. The treatment of a singing call sells the story to the dancers. Vocal techniques and showmanship skills should be used to enhance the performance. Bottom line; sell it so the dancers can have fun!