

### **Music in Scottish Country Dancing**

Does music influence your dancing pleasure?

Do you even hear (or listen to) the differences in Cd's we use for dancing?

When you hear a piece of music, do you recognize the tunes, especially the "lead" tune?

Does the music make you want to dance?

The music should inspire us to dance!

Traditionally, the fiddle on its own was played when teaching dances and the dancing masters (called danciers) accompanied themselves, while they taught the steps. Other instruments were added when accompanying social or group dancing to provide a depth of bass and to enhance rhythm.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the piano became the most commonly used instrument due to its versatility and range. Today some Scottish Country Dance classes are fortunate enough to have an accomplished pianist for classes and the only instrument used is the piano. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century melodeons and concertinas were popular and this graduated to the more versatile accordion.

Today most of the recorded music which we use is "a band" consisting of accordion, fiddle, drums, keyboard and other instruments, providing a full balanced sound.

To complement and help good dancing the music should be rhythmically strong, well phrased and have light and shade and should be played at a suitable tempo for the steps required.

Scottish Country dance music is notoriously hard to play and often requires years of practice. An understanding of music contributes to the ability of dancers and teachers to improve standards and to increase the pleasure of dancing.

Miss Milligan (founder of the modern Scottish Country Dance Society) said "*the music is the stimulus of the dance and the dance should be the physical expression of the music*".

So listen and hear the music...and dance!

Hazel MacDonald.