

Editing Skating Music

There are basic considerations that generally apply to selecting music for a program:

- Age of the skater(s)
- Competitive experience
- Skating ability
- Presentation skills
- Choreographic background
- The type of event –show, test, or competition
- Program length

Dance events have specific requirements for music selected for compulsory dances, original dances, and free dance.

Good music combined with an expressive skater can result in an emotional involving connection with the audience and exquisite performance that lifts skating to new heights.

It is important to choose music that the skater likes provided it can also accomplish a connection with the audience and judges. Any skater is better equipped to interpret music that he or she feels, understands, or has a personal meaning.

Choreographed body movements without having a personal involvement of the skater look mechanical. Generally, judges are much older than most skaters. They may not be familiar with, understand, or like the music that currently is in vogue with teenagers.

Judges may dislike the certain music, but they receive training not to purposely mark your skater down because of the music; however, music that is familiar and/or interesting is more likely to result in a positive response to a skater's interpretation of that type of music.

A composer who creates a musical score that incorporates segments that gradually build to climax provide opportunities for the choreographer and skater demonstrate skating elements that are ideal for faster and slower transitions and footwork sequences. Tempo changes create opportunities for a blending of audio and visual interests that fully demonstrate both technical and artistic skills.

The music can emphasize the skater's strengths while clever choreography can mask weaknesses.

A skater who lacks the ability to match the composer's musical intentions will disappoint the audience and receive lower presentation marks from the judges.

Coaches and choreographers should not expect a skater to interpret music, which is inappropriate to his or her style of skating.

- ❖ **Always use age-appropriate music!**
- ❖ **Powerful music demands powerful skating.**
- ❖ **Beautiful slower sections of music demands elegant skating and extensions.**
- ❖ **Quick, lively music cries out for footwork reflecting the rhythm or tempo.**

Choreographers can incorporate some changes in the music style when the changes accent those things that the skater is best able to demonstrate.

Identifiable Segments: Music is a great memory tool that can help a skater associate different parts of a musical score with the planned skating elements.

This can help a skater avoid "getting lost" during a competition.

If a fall occurs, it also makes it easier for a skater to pick up a program. An excellent training tool of coaches is to require skaters to restart an interrupted competition program during practices. Repetitive music throughout a program invites mistakes to occur.

The music at the beginning of a program needs to be loud enough to be heard, but not so loud that it startles the judges. Some musical scores start with a slow tempo and builds.

If the program's choreography requires a skater to start off at full speed, some coaches record a quick beep or click a second or two before the real music starts to alert the skater to the impending start of their music. The referee starts their stopwatch when the skater actually starts moving.

Record the program so that any volume changes that occur in the program are never painfully loud or become so quiet the audience and judges can barely hear it.

Programs either have a maximum limit or a stated length with a leeway of 10 seconds over or under the stated time. When a skater does not meet the program time requirements, a deduction will be taken by judges.

Remember it is not the music, but the elapsed time starting when the skater actually starts moving and ends when they stop moving.

Generally coaches do not add music to an old program when moving up to a new free skating level that requires a longer program. Any skater who has been performing their program for a long time may have a difficult time in changing

their choreography to incorporate more difficult and technically demanding elements of the next test level.

As skaters progress, many coaches begin to use the services of someone who has a lot of musical experience and who also has the technical expertise to deliver professional caliber editing of music.

It takes time and lots of money to develop a "library" of music suitable for the requirements of figure skating. Editing music is as much an art form as is choreographing a program. It is difficult to combine different pieces of music that sound like an arranger created a special musical score for the program.

Life is much easier for anyone creating a skating program than it was in the days of using 78 rpm records and strobe disks.

In 2009 anyone with a Windows or Macintosh computer can edit musical scores and burn a CD. There are however some potential problems. Unless the CD is finalized, it will not play on other CD players.

Besides technical computer skills, there is a real need to have a background in music to understand how to combine different music so it sounds like one entire piece. Using music recorded by the same orchestra and conductor makes the task much easier.

Combining music, written by classical composers, with show tunes, hip-hop, rap, country western, etc. produces a real cultural shock that should probably be avoided!

Blending classical music with non vocal music from operas makes it easier to combine musical scores without jarring editing cuts.