Argentine Tango

DJ Basic Guidelines

Organize time:
  Load all music onto laptop in 320Kbps or lossless format
  Organize all music by orchestra, singer(s), year and type
  Build Tanda play lists with mutually exclusive songs
  Label Tanda play lists with energy, mood, A+ rating and opener indicator
  Slice up Cortinas

Pre-event:
  Think about when each group of people will arrive for the evening
  Pre-Plan the event play list by dropping in Tandas
  Sprinkle in the Cortinas and stir gently

During the event:
  Arrive early to setup, check the sound system and volume transitions of Tandas to Cortinas
  Break the ice by asking someone to dance to get people on the dance floor
  Walk around the dance floor to check volume levels
  If dancer's feet are not dancing to the music, play something simpler
  If navigation goes crazy, play something slower or boring
  Take notes of songs that need to be fixed or replaced

Popular Golden Age Orchestras:
  Angel D'Agostino
  Anibal Troilo
  Carlos Di Sarli
  Edgardo Donato
  Enrique Rodriguez
  Francisco Canaro
  Juan D'Arienzo
  Lucio Demare
  Miguel Calo
  Osvaldo Fresedo
  Osvaldo Pugliese
  Pedro Laurenz
  Ricardo Tanturi
  Rodolfo Biagi

As a DJ, the greatest compliment is not what people say.
The greatest compliment is after you check volume levels and look for a dance
partner to discover that nobody is available to dance because everyone dancing.

DJing is not a job of fame; it is a service to the dancers.
If you are doing your job, the dancers are having amazing dances
and don't know that you exist.

Music:

It is not important to be able to name orchestras, singers or songs.

It is important to construct an evening of music that inspires everyone to dance all night.

Get the best recordings and keep them in 320Kbps or lossless formats like FLAC.

0.5 second silence at the beginning of the song.

2.0 second silence at the end of the song.

Label your music by orchestra, singer, year and type.

Organize your music so that you can quickly pick the best recording of each song.

Use DJ software that makes sense to you, in the way that you think.

Music Sources:

Zivals, Tango Store: http://www.tangostore.com/

TangoCD: http://www.tangocd.com/

CD Connection: http://www.cdconnection.com/

Club Musical: http://www.clubmusical.com.ar/

The Tango Catalogue: http://store.thetangocatalogue.com/

Discos Volver: http://www.discosvolver.com.ar/

Amazon: http://www.amazon.com/

Music Information:

Tango Info: http://eng.tango.info/

Japanese Tango info: http://www.geocities.jp/arturomkwd/

Zivals (singers but not year): http://www.tangostore.com/

Audio Editor:

http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/

Cortinas for Milonga:

30 seconds including 0.5 and 2.0 seconds of beginning and ending silence.

The Cortina needs to be slightly lower in volume. Don't shock the dancers.

Keep the Cortinas to one style or theme. Don't create chaotic energy.

Try to use one Cortina for each style (eg. Tango, Vals, Milonga).

Only one Cortina is better too many Cortinas.

Cortinas for Practica:

Same as Milonga Cortinas but are only 5 to 10 seconds long.

Practica Cortinas do not require the trailing 2 seconds of silence.

Try to have something very brief to indicate a change.

This allows teachers to clearly manage their time with students.

Handy Items to have in your bag:

Cable with 1/8" headphone plug to stereo RCA Phono plugs

Cable with 1/8" headphone plug to 1/8" headphone plug

Extra battery for cordless mouse

Headphones

Notepad and pencil

Gum or mints

Tanda Content:

Ann Arbor is a close embrace Milongaro community.

Play music from the Golden Age circa 1936 to 1945 that supports the community.

Creating Tandas on the fly is not required.

When starting out, create Tanda play lists at home when you have time to listen.

Make sure that each Tanda play list does not contain any songs in other Tandas.

Put songs together of the same orchestra, singer, time period, rhythm and mood.

Visualize each Tanda as a journey of songs that you are taking a couple through.

Back-load your Tandas so that the best songs are last when the partners really jell.

Start with obvious rhythms and work towards subtle rhythms.

Label their exit energy from 1 to 5 because Tandas may raise or lower energy.

Label A-List Tandas (eg. A for A-List).

Label good opener Tandas (eg. O for Opener).

Label their style (eg. rhythmic, soft, hangtime, elastic, stops).

Label their mood (eg. sweet, romantic, longing, playful, happier).

To keep things fresh or as you gain experience, rework the Tanda play lists.

Challenge yourself to create great Tandas for less favorite songs or orchestras.

Tanda Cycle:

T3 T3 V3 T3 T3 M3

T4 T4 V3 T4 T4 M3

T4 T4 V4 T4 T4 M3

T = Tango, V = Vals, M = Milonga

The number following the letter is the number of songs per Tanda.

Estimate T3T3V3T3T3M3 = 0:55 hours per Tanda cycle

Estimate T4T4V3T4T4M3 = 1:05 hours per Tanda cycle

Each TTVTTM cycle ramps up the energy to the Milonga.

Plan the energy (eg. T[1-2] T[2-3] V T[3-4] T[4-5] M)

The Tanda prior to the Milonga prepares the dancers bodies to dance fast.

After the Milonga, drop the energy back down again to let your dancers recover.

The first two Tandas of the evening should be a rating of 3 to get people dancing.

For Practicas, play clear rhythms with energy from 2 to 4 for... practicing.

LIVE DJing:

Arrive 15 minutes early to setup and if required, request help with the equipment.

Play some sample songs to get a feel for the sound and Cortinas in the room

If necessary, adjust speakers or equalizers.

Initially, if nobody has started dancing yet, break the ice and ask someone to dance.

Later, if nobody is dancing, change the music.

Constantly monitor the volume even when you are dancing.

If the volume is wrong, temporarily excuse yourself to adjust the volume.

Watch the dancer's feet to see if they are dancing to the music.

If their heads look like popcorn, play a lower energy tanda. No Popcorn!

If they all look tired and are sitting, play a higher energy Tanda. No Nappy Time!

Reverse the order of a planned Tanda to raise or lower the energy.

Play dramatic music (De Caro, Pugliese) a couple of hours after dancers warm up.

If you are using a laptop, use a text editor to write notes to yourself.

Note Tandas or songs that don't work.

Note songs that need the silence trimmed, added, have noise or skips.