

Sound at Square Dance Functions

Dear Kevin,

Quite often you get a few negatives about sound.

At state, National and Large Square Dance functions there are always a few dancers who consider the sound system leaves a lot to be desired.

Therefore I would like to present some information to help people understand the difficulties of obtaining perfect sound.

I spent most of my working life as a buildings officer with PMG / Telecom and was attached to the Research Division.

As you know Telecom's business is the transmission of sound, and Research requires special facilities to test new equipment such as speaking and listening rooms, anechoic (non echo) chambers and reverberation rooms.

To enable these facilities to be built correctly I was given a course in sound by our Acoustic Engineers. Sound is energy and radiates like light and when it strikes a hard surface it either reverberates, echoes or bounces.

All surfaces have a reflective value and the harder the surface the bigger the reflection.

In buildings such as a theatre or a concert hall the seats are designed to have a reflective value whether they are occupied or not.

The only way to get good sound is to have a purpose built building.

Sound is not an exact science and even a purpose built building requires to be fine tuned with reflections or baffles.

Buildings available for Square Dancing are multipurpose buildings such as town halls, recreational buildings etc, with hard reflective surfaces etc.

Even with a good sound system it is impossible to get perfect sound unless the walls are lined with expensive acoustic panels.

As people get older their hearing is not as acute, especially in the upper frequency register.

Also Callers have different microphone techniques and varies from deep base to soprano.

The bottom line is that the VSDA go to a lot of trouble, to obtain good sound at a reasonable cost and on the whole is usually very good.

Wal Schubach.

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