

Hiring a Dance Musician?

What you think you're paying for:

Someone to sit on stage and play tunes for three hours

What you're actually paying for:

Someone to sit on stage and play tunes for three hours, **PLUS**

- An hour and a half of **set-up/sound check** and a half-hour of clean-up, so already we're talking five hours per gig, not three, plus **travel time**.
- **Instruments** *Did you know most instruments played at a dance cost between \$2000 and \$8000? They need to be regularly maintained, too!*
- **Incidentals** like **strings, reeds, rosin, picks, bow hair, humidifiers, music stands, instrument stands, metronomes, tuners, books, etc.** *One fiddle string can cost \$15! Guitar strings, which need to be changed every 4-6 weeks, cost about \$8 - \$10 a set.*
- **Specialized Sound Equipment** like **pick-ups & cables** *Most dance musicians rely on quality electronics to get that natural acoustic sound you love.*
- **Lessons and training and lots and lots of practice** to learn the instruments *Did we mention that it takes years to learn how to play an instrument?*
- **More time learning how to play for dancers** *Musicians who understand dance and dance music have put in extra time to learn this specialized skill. Any decent musician can read off a chart, but musicians who can interpret a caller's card and connect with what is happening on the dance floor come to play with years of experience. They learn tunes they know the dancers will enjoy, put together sets and fit tunes to choreography, and have it all ready to go no matter what the caller throws at them.*
- **Rehearsal Time and Space** *Yes we often practice at home, but someone inevitably has to travel to the practice place when the band rehearses together. Rehearsal time is all unpaid time devoted to sounding good for you.*
- **Promotion** *Websites, CDs, ads, contacting venues, scheduling, and even small things like business cards take time and money!*
- **Touring** *Want your favorite festival band at your home venue? Travel expense stipends, when offered, rarely cover the full cost of travel, especially when fuel prices soar.*
- **Living** *Health insurance, taxes, rent, utilities. Most full-time musicians are scraping by and making do. The part-timers use all their vacation days from a regular job to play for your dancing fun.*

Show your appreciation!

You can:

- **Pay extra at the door, and indicate that you want it to go directly to the performers.**
- **Buy their CDs - No bootlegging! (Pay extra for that, too, if you can.)**
- **Bring treats for the ride home - car snacks are always welcome.**
- **Take a moment after every dance to face the stage and CLAP.**
- **Thank the band at the end of the evening.**