

Why not try . . . ?

The Discipline
of the Month



Vicky Tapper photo (WA team)

No 5.

Musical Rides

Five reasons why your club should try Musical Rides

1.

Riding to music is something you can practise at home on your own.

2.

Many horses respond well to riding to music, adapting to the tempo.

3.

Musical rides can be for fun, to qualify for State Championships (some States) or to entertain at festivals and shows.

4

Musical rides are a team event so they are fun to do with friends, and often you get to dress up in costume.

5.

Musical rides don't require special equipment, just an arena and music source.

How to Choose a Theme

Any theme, and the music to go with it, needs to take into account the ages of the riders.

You are advised to have a person to take charge of the costumes to leave the trainer, coach or co-ordinator to focus on the ride. Costumes must include a well fitting helmet and riding boots.

Theme suggestions from a recent Pony Club UK competition included:

- Bake Off,
- Super Heroes,
- Pirates of the Caribbean,
- Bugsy Malone,
- Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,
- Beauty and the Beast,
- Lancaster Bombers,
- Matadors,
- Grease,
- Jungle Book,
- James Bond,
- Thriller



Top and right: Oaklands PC and their Dr Seuss 'Seussical' ride. [You can watch it here](#)
Above: : Little River Pony Club 'in the Army'.

How to Choose your Music

First pick your theme if you have one, and go from there. Eg this photo is from a ride called 'Four Horses and a Wedding'. Songs could include 'Get me to the Church', 'I want to kiss the Bride' 'Auld Lang Syne' etc.

Our experts suggest about 3-4 pieces or a couple of tracks with multiple changes. For young riders what about ABC kids music, The Wiggles, Hi Five? ABBA, 80s dance party, and good old bar type songs for intermediate and older age riders; or soundtracks, particularly stage musical soundtracks. You could have a 'Zorro' theme for senior riders with Superman and Matrix soundtracks. A 'Masquerade' theme could use songs from Phantom of the Opera while a 'Clowns' theme could use music from Barnham or the Greatest Showman.



More examples of good riding music

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Battle of New Orleans, | Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah | Infinity, |
| Any Dream will Do, | Ravers in the UK, | No Can Do, |
| Cotton Eye Joe, | Love Generation, | Welcome to the Club, |
| Knock on Wood, | Out of My Head, | 5678, |
| | Running Bear, | Geronimo |

What about music copyright?

OneMusic is a joint venture between Australia's music licensing bodies, PPCA and APRA AMCOS, and offers blanket public performance licences covering both the musical works and sound recordings.

They should be able to determine whether your planned use requires a licence. You can find them at www.onemusic.com.au, 1300 162 162 and hello@onemusic.com.au.

For large competitions at big venues, the venue management may already have music licencing, which could cover your use.

Riding at Special Events

At the PCA National Championships in Sydney October 2019, 22 lucky NSW Pony Club riders from around the State had the great experience of riding in a Musical Ride Spectacular for the opening ceremony.

They received the best help available, thanks to training sessions personally run by a mixture of both former and serving Mounted Police Officers, including former Commander Don Eyb who has choreographed countless NSW Mounted Police rides, and Wayne Pernice.

Sessions covered troop drill procedures, ride coordination and most importantly, team work skills. They learned about horse spacing, working in troop, sections and half sections, and various troop movements including crossovers and wheels.

This work allowed riders to introduce their horses to the idea of riding in tight formations at both the trot and canter and build communication skills. They trained to ride two performances, a 12-horse ride and a 16-horse ride, both choreographed by Mr. Eyb.

You can watch the [full Championships ride here](#).

Below: Nationals rehearsals in Sydney.



LEFT: Musical rides, like fancy dress, show dressing up in costumes can be a lot of fun! This is Lilydale Pony Club, Tasmania, with 'Alice in Wonderland'.

Learning Routines

Every coach may do it a bit differently. Some have riders learn the routine first then add suitable music; some pick the music, film the team working and match the music to the movements. Several songs joined together are best to show change of pace—you don't want the same music for walking and cantering.

Here's a good way if this is all new. Draw boxes and add a move in each box, noting changes of pace and change of music. You can even colour each arrow for each rider, so they can see their place in the routine.



② "Ramalama TROT."

⑤ "walk"

Querie 6 & 7

TBC with music at next training.

⑨ "Take Your CANTER (x2.)"

Querie 15
May cross thru at next training.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	A	C								
2			M	H						M
3										
4										
5			B	E						B
6										
7	K		F	K						F
8		A			A			A		
9										
10		C								
11			M	H						M
12										
13			B	E						B
14										
15	K		F	K						F
16		A			A			A		
17										
18										
19		C								
20			M	H						M
21										
22			B	E						B
23										
24										
25			B	E						B
26										
27										
28	K		F	K						F

ABOVE: You can use an Excel spreadsheet to set up your musical ride moves, complete with dressage markers.

This is one way to learn your routine . . .



Coach No 1 - pointers

- You need four riders that are passionate about doing the musical ride and parents that are willing and prepared to put in many hours of taking children to practice
- Is best to try and start to get organised at least three months before a qualifier or performance
- Try to make a certain day a week to practise so you have everyone knowing willing and able to make it to that day
- You need a good portable stereo system preferably with a remote control
- You could have a group discussion on the type of music and theme you would like so that everyone has some input
- You need a music co-ordinator and some one to coordinate the costumes/outfits
- The best music is music with 2 beat (trot), 3 beat (canter) and 4 beat (walk) so you are able to ride all paces
- You need to time how long it takes for horses to trot and canter along the long side of arena or to trot/canther the whole of the arena so you have an idea of where horse and riders are as the music beat changes, to help with the designing of your ride
- Try to get the ride down on paper early so riders can look over it while not riding. As you make changes (and yiyu will) send out to riders ahead of the practice.
- Check out the internet and YouTube as there are many of samples of rides and different moves.
- Try and keep your moves to your abilities and encourage riders to keep as close and tight and as evenly spaced as they can
- Remember if you make a mistake just keep smiling and riding as your ride is your ride and judges do not know what you are suppose to be riding.

Smile, enjoy and have fun.



There is no need for your horses to match in colour or size, as this well rehearsed team shows.

Coach No 2 - pointers

- I start by selecting a theme and some music, about 3-4 pieces or a couple of tracks with multiple changes
- The kids and ponies ride around to the different music to see what suits. The kids will get enthused about some and the ponies suit some pieces better than another. Interestingly one piece of music might be terrible for ponies but suit big hacks and vice versa. I don't consciously go for any particular beat or rhythm, just something different, catchy and interesting to the riders and the spectators
- It's about here the ideas generally start flowing
- I then throw a few patterns at the kids, riding single file, in pairs and in fours, practising some of my favourite shapes and patterns so when I throw terms like 'wheel, volte, bullet' at them when choreographing, they know exactly what I mean and what I am asking for
- We park it there for the first session. I then go home and edit the best pieces of music together using a computer software program as soon after the first session as possible while everything is still fresh in my mind.
- When we meet next, I play the music, the kids and ponies warm up to the music and then we start the ride
- I never pre-organise a ride, it is all created at the time with the kids and the ponies. I always video it or scratch out on paper the ride when we are happy with it
- I probably only get one third of the ride done in this first choreographing session
- Again we park it
- I go home and draw up the ride, speed up or slow down the music in preparation for the next session.
- I aim to finish a ride in the second or third session. I always let the kids guide me as to how much they can take in in a session though. Obviously older riders will be able to handle more than younger children. When the kids or the ponies start to wane, it's time to stop
- Make sure to include walk, trot and canter; single, pair and team work, left and right rein and use the whole arena! Try to avoid follow the leader and make patterning flow
- When the ride is complete I video it and put it on paper. I distribute both to the riders and after tweaking the music, provide them a copy too. Listening to the music and imagining riding through the ride while in the car, lying in bed at night is the best way to lock it in the mind.
- Training sessions can vary from a few, to many depending on your team so get to know the kids you'll be working with early and prepare. I found that laying dates out early on a calendar worked best for me and if they were traveling along well, you could skip a week here or there
- Be mindful that clever ponies can start to anticipate the ride and some will start to get bored and naughty so it is important that you are aware of this and look for the warning signs early so that you are well prepared for the big day.
- Costuming should fit the theme but not overtake the ride, be dangerous or detract from the ride but simply add to it and compliment it. It should fit horse and rider comfortably allowing them both to move freely and at their best
- Lastly as team manager, get into the spirit, it connects you with the team and adds to the fun!
- Remember it is meant to be FUN, enjoy the journey!



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Coach No 3 - pointers

- I always choose a few different themes and put music together that has 4/4 beat. Then I get the team to ride to the music and together we choose which music/theme matches the horses.
- There are no specific rules for musical rides other than length (6-8 mins). Costumes are optional but encouraged.
- I use 3-5 different songs in my ride, and I mix them using a computer program 'Acid' - as long as the music is catchy with a good beat it's easy.
- I find people treat it like a dressage test so they learn the test then add the music but I don't - I create as I go so different moves are done on different nuances of the music.

How are rides scored? Rather like a dressage test!

A Request to Consider . . .

One team manager has made a request:

"Could PCA or States or event organisers consider bringing in musical rides for single or pairs of riders at competitions?"

For some small rural clubs it is hard sometimes to get a team of four together. It will maintain interest for more clubs and would be easier for clubs to organise. Many years ago Robinvale (Club) had a great day of single or pair musical rides and was a wonderful, fun day." Food for thought?

Arena size is important

It is important to know the size your performance arena will be, before you start to practice to music.

In Pony Club competitions the arena is often 30m x 60m.

MUSICAL RIDE – OFFICIAL SCORE SHEET 2013

NAME OF CLUB ... DATE OF RIDE .../.../2013

TOTAL FOR TEAM WORK			TOTAL FOR ARTISTIC IMPRESSION		
	Mark	Remarks		Mark	Remarks
Walk Activity and Regularity	7 4	Walk walk good	Initial Impact of Ride and Arena Entry	10 8	
Trot Rhythm & Activity	10 9	Very good not work	Choreography Balance, Design & Variety. Use of Arena Space	10 18	Varied + interesting choreography
Canter Regularity & Smoothness of Paces	10 9		Suitability of Music & Costuming	10 8	Found first section of music not bright enough
Transitions Smoothness & Accuracy of Execution	10 9		Overall Impression of Ride		
Team Work Dressing, distances & Lines	10 14	Good team work + timing	Continuity of Flow & Interest	10 9	
Total for Team Work	50 45		Artistic Impression	50 43	

FALL OF HORSE/RIDER WILL INCUR A PENALTY OF 12 POINTS, 6 PER JUDGE

FINAL SCORE OUT OF 100: 88

ANY OTHER REMARKS BY THE JUDGES: Plenty of variety Good to see team work done well.

JUDGES SIGNATURE

It will probably look like this one . . .

Don't forget to share, and also send us, your photos or videos of musical rides so we can see and share them in our newsletters and on Facebook too!