Ballroom DJ Operating Instructions

Contents

Overview

Ballroom DJ is a software program designed to create, manage and perform music playlists.

Though designed primarily for Ballroom Dance events, it may be found useful for many functions requiring music presentation. The program has many features including:

- Automatically create playlists from song files
- Select song duration - duration variable by genre
- Fade music at selected time
- Voice announcement of dance music genre
- Modify tempo of selected songs
- Modify start position of selected songs
- Print or Create Excel Sheets of song lists
- Now playing screens can be shown on external monitor or projector
- Images can be interspersed on the Now Playing screen
- Allow users to see Playlists on their smart phones or computers
- Remote control supported (Infrared and WiFi)
- Jukebox mode
- Sound Effects Board
- Automatic announcements made at selected times
- Multitude of additional features

Music Source

Ballroom DJ uses .mp3 music files. These files are contained in folders. The name of the folder is what Ballroom DJ uses to catalog the genre of the songs. We suggest you create a main music folder with a

name like "Dance Music". Under this folder, you create a number of additional folders that designate the genre type for the music. For example, Foxtrot, Waltz, Tango etc.

Program Layout

The program has two main areas. The large area at the top of the screen has tabs for different program functions.

The tabs are:

- Playlist – Shows the current playlist
- Now Playing – A screen that shows the current song information and information for upcoming selections.
- Create Playlist – Program section used to create playlists
- Manual Song Selection – Program section to manually select songs from cataloged genre.
- Options – Adjust many of the preferences for Ballroom DJ
- Foley Board – Sound effects board

The lower section contains the music player controls. These controls are shown regardless of the tab selected in the upper program section.

Music Player Controls

Limit Song Length – When this box is checked, the song length will be limited to the number of seconds shown in the up / down selection box to the right. Song lengths may also be adjusted for individual genres in the Options Tab.

Announce Songs – Ballroom DJ will use Text to Speech to announce the genre of the songs as they are played. Options for Text to Speech will be found on the Options Tab.

Repeat Playlist – When Ballroom DJ reaches the end of the playlist it will repeat instead of stopping.

Tempo Up / Down – Allows you to change the tempo of the currently playing song. The up / down arrows will cause a change in tempo of 5%. The tempo will return to normal at the end of the song.

Play Playlist – This button will start the playlist starting at the song that is currently selected in the playlist window. If no song is selected, the playlist will start at the beginning. When the playlist is playing, the song that is currently playing will be highlighted in green. The song that will play next will be highlighted in blue. If you click on a song in the playlist it will change the blue highlight to that song and it will be played next. This can be a quick way to skip songs in the list when desired.

Pause Playlist / Resume Playlist – The label and function of this button will change between Pause Playlist and Resume Playlist. Use this button to temporarily suspend playing.

Stop Play – Stops the current play.

Skip Song – Immediately fades out the current song and moves to the next song in the playlist.

Played Time – The area between the Pause Playlist / Resume Playlist and Stop Playlist buttons will show the number of seconds the current song has played.

Progress Bar – Below the player controls is a progress bar that graphically shows the progress of the current song that is playing. At the left of this bar is a label that shows the starting position for this song.

At the right it shows the end position. In parentheses is shown the actual full length of the current song.

Below the progress bar is a label that shows the title of the current song. Clicking the progress bar at any point will position the playing of the song at that point.

Seek – The Seek Left and Right arrows will adjust the play position of the song plus or minus 15 seconds.

Music Volume – This slider will adjust the volume of the music (just the music) in relation to the total volume of the computer. The text to speech voice will always be at full volume and is not affected by this slider. Double-click the slider bar at any point will also move the slder.

Shortcut Keys –

Arrow Keys: You can use the arrow keys on the keyboard to adjust the volume slider. The Up and Down keys will adjust the volume up and down slightly. The Right and Left arrow keys will adjust in larger increments.

Spacebar: pause and resume play.

Delete key: skip to the next song in the playlist.

Number Pad + and – keys: raise or lower the tempo.

PGUP / PGDN: Fast Forward or Rewind the current playing song.

HOME: Restart the current song.

END: Stop the playlist

Main Screen Tabs
The various tabs are described below.

Playlist Tab

Load Music Files – Ballroom DJ uses music organized by folders. We suggest you create a main music folder with a name like Dance Music. Under this folder, you can create a number of additional folders that designate the genre type for the music. When this button is clicked, you will be asked to select the main music folder that contains all of the genre folders. This is how Ballroom DJ will find and catalog your music files. All music files must be in mp3 format.

Music File List – This will show the music files that Ballroom DJ has cataloged. If one of the Genres is clicked in the Genre List box, only those files from that Genre will be shown in the File List.

If you highlight one of the song files and click the Right Arrow, that song will be added to the play list at the position that is currently selected in the playlist.

Right Click in the file List to bring up a menu for the following functions.

Search List – This will allow you to search for matches within the list of song files. All the songs that match the entered phrase will be highlighted. You can go down through the matches using the F3 key.

Play Selection– plays selected song.

Add to Playlist – The selected song will be added to the play list at the position that is currently selected in the playlist.

Clear List – Clears the File List.

Genre List – This will show a list of the Genre song types that Ballroom DJ has cataloged. If a Genre selection is made, the File List box above will show the song files for that genre. If the right arrow is clicked, all song files for the currently selected genre will be added to the playlist.

Load Playlist Button – Will allow you to select a previously saved playlist.

Save Playlist Button – Save the current playlist to the hard drive. You will be prompted for a filename. Use something descriptive such as "Saturday Dance 2". The files are saved as .bdj files (Ballroom DJ Playlist files)

Playlist Box – Shows the current playlist. The playlist box has the following functions:

Click on a song to select it. Details song information will show in the "Current Song" area on the right.

Double Click on a song will play that song.

Click, Drag and Drop a song to a new location in the playlist.

Select a song and click the Left arrow at the left of the playlist to remove the song.

Select a song and use the up / down arrows at the right to change the position of the song in the playlist.

Right Click on a song to bring up a menu for the following functions.

Remove Song – removes song from playlist

Play Song – plays selected song.

Swap song – the program will swap the current song with another of the same genre. The program will select a song that is not already used in the playlist.

Playlist Time Position – shows the time position of the selected song.

Song Modifier – Brings up the song modifier dialog. The Song Modifier dialog will allow you to modify how Ballroom DJ will play the selected song each time that song is played. The song itself is not modified; Ballroom DJ will use the selections to determine how the song will be played. For example, if a desired song has a long intro, you can have it start after the intro. If the Tempo of the song is more or less than desired, Ballroom DJ can play it at a selected tempo each time the song is played. If a song is particularly loud or soft in volume, you can have Ballroom DJ play the song at a percentage of the normal volume, higher or lower.

Calculate Full Playlist time – Uses all the parameter for the current playlist to calculate an accurate duration.

Search Playlist – Will search the playlist and highlight the first occurrence of the entered phrase. You can use the F3 key to look for additional matches.

Sort Playlist by BPM – If your mp3 music contains BPM (Beat Per Minute) for the song, Ballroom DJ can sort the songs in order based on the BPM. This can be handy for practice or teaching.

Print Playlist – Allows you to print the current playlist.

Export Playlist – Save the playlist to a comma separated file that may be used for Excel or other programs.

Shuffle Playlist – Shuffle the songs randomly in the current playlist.

Clear Playlist – Clears the current playlist.

When the playlist is playing, the song that is currently playing will be highlighted in green. The song that will play next will be highlighted in blue. If you click on a song in the playlist it will change the blue highlight to that song and it will be played next. This can be a quick way to skip songs in the list when desired.

Current Song – Shows information contained in the mp3 file for the currently selected song. Note that there are a number of mp3 formats and some songs have little or no information to display.

Now Playing Tab

When the playlist is playing, the Now Playing Tab will show information about the current and upcoming songs. If you have a computer at a dance, you can start the playlist and then select the Now Playing Tab.

Attendees can come by and see the information shown on the screen. Two information screens will be shown in rotation. The first screen will show the information for the current song playing and the next song to be played. The second screen will show the genre of the current song and the genre of the next 5 songs to be played.

In addition, images can be shown in rotation. The images will be shown for a few seconds in between the first and second information screens. These images might be photos from previous dances or might be advertising or promotional images.

To have images displayed on the Now Playing Screens: Create a folder under the Ballroom DJ program folder called "Images". In this folder place the desired images. The images must be .jpg, .gif or .bmp type image files. Ballroom DJ will use these images to be shown in rotation on the Now Playing Screens.

Note: *If the playlist has stopped, the information screens will not be seen but the images will continue to be shown like a slide show.*

Second Monitor – Ballroom DJ can display the Now Playing Screen on a second monitor or projector. To use this feature, connect a second monitor (or projector) to your computer. Set Windows to "Extend

Desktop" to the second monitor. Note: *This must be done before starting the Ballroom DJ program.*

Then, on the Now Playing Tab (or the Options Tab) click the button titled "Start 2nd Monitor". This will cause the second monitor to display the Now Playing screens regardless of what the program is showing on the first monitor.

Create Playlist Tab

The features on this tab are used to help create a playlist automatically.

The grid shows a list of the genres that Ballroom DJ has cataloged. The left column has the name of the genre. The second column shows the number of available songs for the particular genre. The third column is where we will enter the number of songs desired for this genre to be placed in our playlist.

To automatically create a playlist do the following:

1. Select the number of hours desired for the playlist to be created in the up / down selector for "Number of Playlist hours.

2. In the third column of the grid, enter the number of songs for the type of genre desired for the selected playlist length. For example, if you have a genre type of Foxtrot and the playlist length is 3 hours, enter the number of Foxtrots you would like to hear in the 3 hour playlist. As you enter the numbers, the top of

the third column will show the number of songs remaining to fill the playlist for the desired time. When this reaches 0 you have selected all the necessary songs.

3. Click the "Make Playlist" button.

4. The program will generate a playlist with the indicated selections. The program has an algorithm to spread the genre types in the playlist. You can adjust the positions of the songs and make song swaps as desired. These features are outlined on the Playlist Tab.

5. When you have the playlist as desired, be sure to use the "Save Playlist" button on the Playlist Tab to save the playlist.

Manual song additions. You may have some songs that are not in the normal genre folders that you would like to add to the playlist. Use the "Add Mp3" button to browse for the desired mp3 file and add it to the list. This must be done before the "Make Playlist" button is used. These song files will be added to the playlist.

Options Tab

Test Speech Button – Ballroom DJ uses a Text to Speech module to announce songs and to make timed announcements. When this button is clicked, the Text to Speech module will be activated and will speak a test message.

Speech Controller Button – This button will bring up the Text to Speech Controller with it's associated options. The Speech module uses Microsoft's Text to Speech to produce the speech. The control module will allow changes to the Microsoft speech engine. You will be able to select voices, change pitch, speed etc.

Delay after Speech – Determines how much time between the spoken announcement and the next song. If this time is too short, the announcement may be overridden by the start of the music.

Voice Pronunciation Modifier – The text to speech engine may sometimes need help with pronunciation. This area will assist in teaching the speech engine how to pronounce certain words. Type the word you wish to pronounce in the box provided along with a phonetic pronunciation in the "Pronounce" box. Use the "Try" button to listen to the pronunciation. When satisfied, click the Add/Update button. If you wish to delete a pronunciation line, highlight it in the list and click the delete button.

Notes about Text to Speech – Text to speech uses the Microsoft Speech Engine. A variety of voices are available. Starting in Windows 7, even more life- like voices became available such as Microsoft Anna. In Windows 8, more voices were added.

Ballroom DJ allows you to select either the earlier voices or the Windows 7/8 voices if available.

The text to speech is always spoken at full volume. When you adjust the music volume, it does not affect the volume of the voices.

Help – Brings up this help file.

Start 2nd Monitor – This button performs the same function as the button on the Now Playing tab. To use this feature, connect a second monitor (or projector) to your computer. Set Windows to "Extend Desktop" to the second monitor. Note: *This must be done before starting the Ballroom DJ program.*

Then, click this button. This will cause the second monitor to display the Now Playing screens regardless of what the program is showing on the first monitor.

Beats per minute Program – Ballroom DJ comes with a companion program that will help you determine the tempo of songs. This can be very helpful for dances or competitions. Clicking this button will bring up the program. You will be able to tap the spacebar or mouse button in time with the music and have the tempo displayed.

Show Touch Panel – When this box is checked, a touch panel will appear next to Ballroom DJ with several touch buttons. This is helpful for tablets and touch screens when using Ballroom DJ.

Normalize Audio Level – This will only show on computers running Windows 7 or greater. Ballroom DJ will attempt to adjust the music volume to a mid-level based on sampling levels of the current song. Songs with wide swings in music volume may not adjust well. If this option is selected, and you adjust the volume manually, the automatic adjustment will cease for the current song.

Limit Song Length by Genre – One of the main features in Ballroom DJ is the ability to limit the length of songs played for a dance or event. There are three ways to limit the song length.

1. On the Main screen you can check the box for "Limit song length" and use the selector to set the number of seconds for the limit.

2. In this section of the Options Tab you can select the desired genre and set the maximum play length for that genre. So, for example, you could have a maximum length of 180 seconds for Swing and have 90 seconds for Quickstep.

3. On the Main screen, in the playlist, you can select a song, right click to bring up the Song Modifier, and set the maximum length that particular song.

Pronounce Genre – You can see how the text to speech of Ballroom DJ will pronounce the genre shown in the drop down box.

Timed Announcements –Ballroom DJ can make text to speech announcements at designated times.

To set an announcement:

1. Use the Up / Down arrows to select the announcement number. You may have multiple announcements queued.
2. Set the time you would like the announcement to be made.
3. Select if you would like to wait for the song to finish before the announcement is made. So, for example, if you set the announcement for 6:00PM, the announcement will be made after the song that is playing at 6:00PM.
4. Select if you would like to stop the playlist after the announcement. For example, you announce the end of the dance at 10:00PM. The playlist will stop after the announcement.
5. Check the box to enable the announcement.
6. Click the Save Changes button to queue the announcement.

You can use the Speak button to listen to your announcement as it will sound.

Web Server – The attendees at your event can see what is playing, and view the entire playlist on their smart phone, tablet, or computer. They need only open a browser to www.BallroomDJmusic.com. In addition, they can make suggestions through their devices that will appear on the Ballroom DJ program.

To use this feature:

1. You need to have a unique name for your event. You want to be sure that it will not conflict with other dance names. For example, you would not want to use "Saturday Dance" for a dance name as it is too generic. Instead use "ABC Ballroom Saturday Dance" or "USA Dance Chapter 1234". Enter the name of the dance in the box provided. This will be used to list your dance on www.BallroomDJmusic.com.
2. Make sure your computer is connected to the Internet.
3. Check the box to enable Web Server.
4. Use the Test button to confirm all is working.

Ballroom DJ will now automatically update the server as your playlist is processed

You can use the "Web Page Message" area to post a message on the web pages. For example "Our next dance will be Aug. 2nd". That message will appear on the various screens shown to the attendees.

On certain web pages, your attendees will see a Suggest button which offers them a suggestion form. Here they can suggest a particular song, genre etc. When they enter a suggestion it will pop up on the Ballroom DJ screen.

Enable Local Server – Ballroom DJ also has a built-in web server that can be used on your local network instead of using the Internet. In this case, an IP address will be shown. Users can enter this IP address in their browsers if they are on the same internal network as Ballroom DJ. This feature is somewhat deprecated by the web server feature shown above. However, there is one important addition. The operator can use this feature as a remote control. To use this, in your browser, enter the IP address shown followed by "Control.htm" Most of the features of Ballroom DJ can be controlled with this Wifi remote control feature.

Enable Remote Control – Ballroom DJ can use some remote control devices to operate some of the features of the program. These are generally remote controls with USB receivers. Ballroom DJ is also designed to be controlled by "Air Click" USB remote controllers.

Manual Song Select – These options determine how the Manual Song Select tab will operate. See the Manual Song Select Tab for details on these selections.

Pause Between Songs – Normally, when playing a playlist, Ballroom DJ will move from one song to another without any delay. In that case, this is normally set to 0. There may be instances where it would be desired to have a pause between songs. For example, if Ballroom DJ was playing songs for a performance, you may wish to have a pause between songs to allow the dancers to change positions or wait for applause.

Music Fade Out – When playing a playlist, Ballroom DJ will limit song lengths as selected previously. When a song has reached the limit of its play length, Ballroom DJ will fade out the song and move to the next song in the playlist. These settings allow the operator to vary the fading of songs. In most cases, the defaults for this selection will work. If you wish to change how quickly the fading will occur, you may change these settings. To restore the settings to their defaults use the Default button.

Manual Song Select – See next section for an explanation of these options.

Manual Song Select Tab

This tab allows the manual selection of songs to be played rather than the normal playlist performance. There are two modes of operation available. The mode of operation for this tab is selected in the Options Tab.

Manual Mode – in this mode, this tab will show a series of buttons corresponding to the music genres that Ballroom DJ has cataloged. Clicking on any of these buttons will play a song randomly selected for that genre. This could be used if Ballroom DJ was to play songs for a dance competition.

Juke Box Mode – This mode actually creates a temporary playlist much like selections for a jukebox. When this mode is selected in the Options Tab, a picture of a jukebox will be seen on this tab.

The tab will show a series of buttons corresponding to the music genres that Ballroom DJ has cataloged. When a button is clicked, a list of songs will be shown for that genre. When a song is selected, it is added to the currently playing list. If the "Show Keypad" selection has been made on the Options Tab, a keypad will be shown to select the number of the song. If Ballroom DJ is installed on a computer with a touch display, this operation will mimic that of an actual jukebox.

Coin Op Mode – This selection requires an additional program and coin operation hardware. It allows Ballroom DJ to be used as a coin operated jukebox.

Foley Board Tab

This section allows for the playing of sound effects. The tab will show a series of buttons corresponding to the sound effects that Ballroom DJ has cataloged. Ballroom DJ looks for sound effects in a folder named "SoundEffects" under the Ballroom DJ program folder. You can place up to 42 sound effects in this folder. The sound effects can be .mp3 files or .wav files. When one of the sound effects buttons is clicked, the sound effect is played immediately.

Additional Items

Random Music Files -You can create or rename a music file with the name "Random.mp3" and place it in any or all of the Music Genre File Folders. If this "Random" song is added to a playlist, Ballroom DJ will select a random song from that genre when the song is played.

Ballroom DJ mini Gamepad Remote

Operation:
Press ON/Start switch for about 2 seconds. Blue LED will come on then flash. If paired with your computer, blue LED will go out. If it continues to flash quickly it is not paired. See paring below. If it flashes slowly, remote should be charged. If the LED is red, the remote is in the wrong mode, see below.

When the remote is on, pressing the ON/Start switch will have Ballroom DJ swap the current song that is playing with another of the same genre.

To turn off the remote, press and hold the ON/Start switch for about 5 seconds. (The remote will shutoff after a period of inactivity.)

The Mode Switch on the side of the remote must be in the UP position (Gamepad mode) to operate with BallroomDJ. In Ballroom DJ, on the options tab, be sure that "Enable Remote" is checked and that "Bluetooth Gamepad" is selected for the type;

LED indicator:
The LED should come on briefly when the remote is turned on. It will flash several times until it recognizes your computer then it will go out. The LED should be blue. The LED will come on each time your press a button.
LED flashes rapidly – Remote is not paired with a computer
LED flashes slowly – Remote should be charged
LED is red instead of blue – Remote is in wrong mode. Press the ON/Start button and the @ button (the one you use to skip a song) simultaneously for a couple seconds. The remote should enter the correct mode. If not, turn off the remote and try this sequence again.

Pairing the remote:

This should only need to be done once with your computer. Press the ON/Start switch for about 2 seconds. The remote should come on and start blinking a blue LED. Make sure your computer is in discoverable Bluetooth mode. Look for a Mocute Keyboard device to be discovered. The paring code is 0000. The pairing sequence may have to be tried a few time depending on your version of windows.