

HISTORY OF JAZZ DANCE

Jazz dance is a broad term for American social and stage dances employing jazz or jazz-influenced music. The origins of jazz dance are found in the rhythms and movements of the African American slaves. The style of African dance is earthy: low knees bent, pulsating bodies, isolations, and hand clapping. In the 19th century American whites discovered that they enjoyed the music and dance that the slaves had created. Minstrel shows were established which included white men imitating the dances of the African Americans. These were mainly solos and improvisation. The 1920's introduced Dixieland jazz music, fast ragtime beat, and the growth of jazz dance was influenced by this music. The Charleston, shimmy and other isolation movements became popular. The 1930's brought the jitterbug and boogie-woogie and the 1940's was the Swing era. The American theatrical dance underwent a major development in the 1950's and 1960's and a style emerged that drew upon the elements of ballet and modern. Jazz developed an artistic quality and made its way to Broadway and gained the respect of ballet and modern dance choreographers. It emphasized body line and flexible torso, fast footwork with feet basically parallel (unlike the turned-out feet basic to ballet), and exaggerated movements of individual body parts. In general, it concentrated on floor-oriented steps as apposed to high lifts and leaps.

WHAT IS DANCE

- A. Dance of Emotion
It comes from the inner-self
- B. Dance is Discipline
It is the complete mastery and grace of a body that defies gravity and moves
360 degrees in space
- C. Dance is Physical
It requires flexibility, strengthen, and endurance
- D. Dance is Art
It is an expression. Our body tells the story

BODY ALIGNMENT

- Is needed to achieve maximum balance. It's the basis for effective movement patterns, helps prevent injury, and creates the best body image.
- Refers to the relationship of the individual body segments to each other. We look at the alignment of the spine in relations to the head and leg.
- Reference Points:
 - Top of ear
 - Middle of shoulder
 - Center of hip
 - Back of knee cap
 - Front of anklebone

VOCABULARY

1. Plie: to bend the knees
 - A. knees line up over toes
 - B. all toes remain on floor
2. Releve: to rise
 - A. lifting heels off the floor by pushing down into the floor
 - B. weight between 1st and 2nd toes
3. Tendu: to work with a straight leg by sliding out to pointed toe
 - A. energy leads from the back of the leg starting with the heel
Through the ball and then to the toe
4. Degage: to disengage
 - A. same as a tendu but foot releases from the floor
5. Grande Battement: large disengagement
 - A. same as a degage only larger
6. Passe: to pass through
 - A. passe position is toe to knee
7. Develop: to unfold
 - A. leg unfolds from the knee
8. Chasse: to chase
 - A. travels sideways, forwards, and backwards
9. Port de bras: movement of the arms through positions
10. Jete: to leap
11. Ronde jam: circle of the legs
12. Sou sou: over/under with feet