

DANCE STUDY GUIDE

(revised 09)

I. Introduction:

Dancing is an act of moving the body in rhythm, usually in time to music. Throughout civilization men and women have danced. People, from very young to very old, seem to have a natural urge to express their feelings through rhythmic movement.

Dancing is both an art and a form of recreation. As an **art form**, a dance may tell a story, set a mood, or express an emotion. For example, a ballet dancer's movement can describe the fluttering of a wounded swan. As a **form of recreation**, dancing has long provided fun, relaxation and companionship. On the American frontier, for example, square dancing gave pioneers families a welcome chance to socialize. Today, dancing at a party or other gathering remains a popular way for people to enjoy themselves and make new friends.

II. Why do people dance?

- A. Most people dance simply to have fun or to entertain others.
- B. For many people, dancing provides a means of effective and personal communication. A dancer can express such feelings as joy, anger, or helplessness without saying a word. Modern dance is type of this dancing.
- C. In many societies, dancing plays a role in courtship. It serves as a way for men and women to become acquainted before they marry.
- D. Throughout human history, dancing has been used in religious rituals and worship. Many traditional dances are still done today.

III. Kinds of Dancing

There are two major kinds of dancing: **theatrical and social**

- A. **Theatrical dancing is performed for the entertainment of spectators** and includes: ballet, modern dance, musical/comedy dancing and tap dancing.
- B. **Social dancing is performed for the pleasure of the participants** rather than for the entertainment of an audience. There are many types of social dances. Most of them have specific steps and rhythms. Two types of social dance are folk dancing and popular dancing. **Folk dancing** is dances that have become part of the customs and traditions of a people. For example: square dancing, the Irish jig and the polka. **Popular dancing** is the kind of dancing people do for fun, like at parties, weddings, or galas and is performed to live band music or recorded music like in nightclubs and discos. Popular or social dances include such old favorites as the waltz, the cha cha, the jitterbug or the tango to today's favorites like the electric slide, the cha cha slide and hundreds of country line dances (i.e. Chocolate City Hustle, Slappin Leather and Elvira). Most social dances are "fads" that become associated with the period in which they are popular. The most popular dances of one period are out of date in the next.

IV. The American Dance Timeline: What they danced and when

- A. pre 1890: Waltz, Quadrille, Minuet, Gavotte
- B. 1890's: Polka, Schottische, **Cotton Eyed Joe**
- C. 1900-1920: The Roaring Twenties = Foxtrot, Turkey Trot, Peabody, Charleston
- D. 1920-1930: Jive, Lindy Hop
- E. 1930-1940: **Swing Era and the beginning of the Latin Dance influence**
Boogie Woogie, Shag, and Susie Q (Swing), Rumba, Samba, and Tango (Latin)
- F. 1940-1950: Mambo, West Coast Swing, Jitterbug and Merenque
- G. 1950-1960: **The Age of Rock and Roll – Dick Clark and American Bandstand**
Cha Cha, Bosa Nova, Stroll
- H. 1960-1970: **"Fad" dances, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones**
Dances with foot movement (traveling, patterned steps) = Hully Gully, Watusi, the Madison and the Bunny Hop
Dances without foot movement = Monkey, Jerk, Mashed Potato, Pony, Swim, and the Twist (Chubby Checker)
- I. 1970-1980: **Soul Train - Everyone was dancing single (the start of line dancing)**
Hustle, Bus Stop, Bump, YMCA, Night Fever (Travolta Point 1978), Two Step, and Country Waltz
- J. 1980-1990: Break Dancing, Hand Jive (from the movie *Grease*), Tush Push, the "classic"
country line dances, Running Man and Moonwalk
- K. 1990-2000: Achy Breaky (1992- Billy Ray Cyrus), Slappin Leather and Country Line dances, Electric Slide, and Cha Cha Slide
- L. 2000-present: **Dancing with the Stars -Revival of Ballroom and Latin Dances** (Waltz, Salsa, Cha Cha, Tango, etc.)

V. Rules of Dancing

- A. Couple dancing: The man always leads and the lady always follows.
- B. Line Dancing: One simply dances the steps in unison with everyone else.
- C. Freestyle Dancing: Dance with one's personal space without contact with other dancers.

VI. Line Dancing Terminology

- A. **Brush or Scuff:** A sweeping movement of the heel of the foot against the floor.
- B. **Count:** The number of beats it takes to complete a dance step or to one complete sequence of the dance.
- C. **Cross:** To move one foot over the other, either in front or behind.
- D. **Dance:** A sequence of steps which are repeated until the end of the music.
- E. **Freeze:** A stop, no movement.
- F. **Grapevine:** A three-count traveling move performed side to side and often finished with a fourth count that is a touch, brush, or kick. When referred to as a *vine*, the second step crossed in back. All four steps can be performed while turning called a *rolling grapevine* or
- G. **Jazz Box:** This is a four count move and can be performed to the left or right. Step in each corner of an imaginary box on the floor. The steps(to the left) are: Cross right over left, step back on the left, back on the right step left beside right.
- H. **Jump:** Spring into the air off both feet and land on both feet.
- I. **Point:** Stretching the toes of the free foot so the foot "point" forward, backward, sideways, or crosswise. Usually ends in a tap or touch.
- J. **Rock:** Two weight changes with feet apart moving forward and backward.
- K. **Shuffle:** Three steps performed forward or backward to two beats of the music. Sometimes described as step-together-step (left, right, left or right, left, right).
- L. **Slide:** A movement in any direction, stepping on one foot and then "drag" the free foot up to the supporting foot.
- M. **Stomp:** Hit the floor with the whole foot or heel.
- N. **Strut:** A two count walk performed with attitude by stepping on the heel and rolling to the toes.
- O. **Swivel:** With feet together, turn on the balls of the foot right or left and rotate the hips side to side. Most of the time four beats of music are require to complete the step (right, left, right center) Sometimes a swivel is referred to as "Mash the potatoes".
- P. **Tap or Touch:** The toe or the heel of the free foot taps or touched the floor without a weight change. The step can be single or double taps using four beats of music.
- Q. **Tempo:** Speed of the beat of music.
- R. **Toe/Heel Fan:** With feet together, rotate toes/heels out and return to center, keeping heels/toes together.
- S. **Turn:** A rotation of the body, taking one or more steps to complete.
- T. **Walk:** Two or more steps forward, backward or side to side.
- U. **Wall:** A wall is the direction in which the dancers face at any given time. In line dances, a dance is said to consist of a number of walls (1, 2 or 4 walls)
- V. **Weave:** Moving to the left or to the right, this is a grapevine with a cross in front as well as a cross behind. This creates a slight zig zag pattern on the floor for 8 counts.

Country Line Dancing:

- A social dance style in which a group of people dances a sequence of steps together, in unison. The dancers stand in a series of rows facing the same direction.
- The origin of American country line dancing are disputed, but many believe the dance is related to traditional English and French social dance forms. Country dancing came to the New World with the earliest colonists and continued to evolve. The traditional line dance (in which men and women usually faced each other) long held sway in New England while the French quadrille (an ancestor of the square dance) was popular in the South.
- The most recent renaissance of line dancing began in American discos and country-western dance clubs during the 1970's. The most popular dances integrated various dance styles and featured rows of dancers all facing the same direction. Dances included the Electric Slide, the Bus Stop and the Cowboy Charleston.
- Starting in the 1980's country music crossed over onto American pop charts with tunes made for line dancing. In 1992 Brooks and Dunn had a hit with "Boot Scootin Boogie." The song had already been choreographed for line dancing. In 1993 Billy Ray Cyrus had an even bigger hit with the single "Achy Breaky Heart." The song's popularity was fueled by the line dance created to promote it.

- One of the benefits of line dancing is that you don't need a partner. Everyone dances together, facing the same direction, in a series of straight lines. The dance is comprised of a sequence of moves that lasts for a defined number of beats, or a "count." Dancers usually do a turn during the sequence. The number of turns in a dance is referred to as the number of "walls." Dances can be "one-wall," "two-wall," or "four-wall."
- Common steps include combinations like the grapevine, scuff, stomp, cross and jazz box.
- Unless a hand gesture is part of the dance, all moves are done with the feet. The rest of the dancer's body is traditionally held in a relaxed posture. For country line dancing men dance with their thumbs hooked in their pockets or in their belt, and women usually hold their hands in a relaxed fist at hip or waist level.

The Cha Cha Slide

The Cha Cha Slide, or Casper Slide as it is also known, was released in 1996 as a song/dance track developed specifically for Bally's Total Fitness. The song became so popular at their gyms that creator DJ Casper decided to record it on his album the Cha Cha Slide: The Original Slide Album. The album was released on September 19, 2000, and the dance became widely popular in north America, especially in Houston, Chicago, Atlanta, Memphis, and Detroit. The dance acts as an undated replacement for the Electric Slide, which was popular in the 1980s.

Cupid Shuffle

Danced to the song of the same name by the hip-hop artist Cupid, the Cupid Shuffle has become a very popular dance. The dance is a hip-hop variation of country line dancing and is extremely simple to perform, especially since all the steps are sung in the lyrics. Many have compared the dance to the Cha Cha Slide (1996).

Macarena

The dance gained widespread popularity in 1996. In the summer of 1996, the song spent 14 weeks on the US Billboards singles chart. The song is very upbeat and has a fast pace, distinctive dance associated with it. The dance is a Latin line dance designed for large groups to perform it at once.

Chicken Dance (aka. The Funky Chicken and the Bird Dance)

The dance began in the 1950's and the dancer makes various movements that mimic a chicken: chick beaks, chicken wings, and tail feathers

Disco

- 1973 is the official birth year of the music we know as disco.
- The term "disco" was used to describe a specific kind of dance music gaining popularity in "discotheques" (dance clubs featuring a DJ rather than a live band). The people going to these clubs wanted to dance together because the free-style line dancing of the sixties had become tedious and rather lonely. Both line and partner dances were created to popular disco songs.
- The dances borrowed footwork from the swing, salsa, foxtrot, cha cha, and other partner dances. They added dramatic hand gestures and strutting to draw attention to their dancing bodies. The beat was steady and didn't change tempo significantly. Dancers were encouraged to keep on dancing until the break of dawn.
- Van McCoy had dancers doing "The Hustle" in 1975. The original hustle line dance came to be known in disco as the California Hustle or the Bus Stop.
- Disco had its stars in the dance world, like John Travolta. His memorable solo moves in the movie "Saturday Night Fever" helped to fuel the disco craze as well the TV show Dance Fever from 1979 to 1985. Disco style faded away in the mid-1980's.

Ballroom

- Though ballroom dance is as old as the middle ages, its modern variations are still enjoyed all over the world. In the style, the symbolic union of two partners who perfectly compliment and mirror each other showcases a unique grace and beauty. Ballroom offers the poise of ballet, the excitement of disco, and the romance of the "golden age" of Hollywood.
- With the exception of the tango, all of the ballroom dances known today originated in the royal courts of Europe. The tango came from Buenos Aires, Argentina, where it was originally considered a dance for the lower classes.
- In the 30's and 40's, ballroom dance was popularized by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Their glamorous films depicted well-dressed couples having the times of their lives gliding around vast ballroom floors.
- Today, ballroom is primarily practiced internationally as a competitive sport. Competitions are monitored in the United States by USA Dance and internationally by the International DanceSport Federation. Competition judge

participants in the basic dances – waltz, foxtrot, and tango as well as “Latin” dances like the salsa, rumba and the cha cha.

- In each type of ballroom dance, a man and woman move together while holding each other in a specific, very formal embrace. The man’s left hand holds the lady’s right at about shoulder level. The lady’s left hand rests on top of the man’s right upper arm, and the man places his right hand on the lady’s left shoulder blade. The lady’s left elbow should rest very lightly on the man’s right elbow. The man steps forward, counter-clockwise around a large floor space, while the woman steps backward simultaneously, following his lead.
- The “lead and follow” nature of ballroom dance is the aspect that makes this style particularly intriguing as well as uniquely difficult. Both skills are difficult to develop, and involve partners becoming sensitive to very subtle signals. As he dances, the man must spontaneously, yet intelligently, determine the best combination of steps to navigate the turns and straight-aways of the dance floor. As she dances, the lady must sense his signals, almost before they are given, in order to appear to move simultaneously with her partner.

Waltz

- The sway, rise and fall of the dance differentiate the waltz from other ballroom dances. A soft, gentle, and romantic dance with long sweeping movements, turning partners, and stylish poses, the waltz is a dance that demands the attention of the audience.
- The waltz is a graceful, rolling dance set to strong melodies with a reputation for being prominent among high society. It originated from modest roots of the peasants in Austria and Bavaria and became a staple of the Hapsburg court in the 17th century. By the 18th century, the waltz crossed the border into France, where it was embraced by high society.
- Music plays a vastly important role in the dance. Set to lively and strong $\frac{3}{4}$ time music with a strong accent on the 1st beat and a basic pattern of step-step-close, the waltz remained a popular formal dance for over 400 years.
- Today, the waltz is danced in all areas of the world. The beauty and grace of the waltz, along with its long-standing popularity, is unmatched in dancing.