

DANCE STUDY GUIDE

(revised 07-08)

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 is front as well as a cross behind. This creates a slight zig zag pattern on the floor for 8 counts.