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PERFORMING ARTS SOCIETY OF ACADIANA

BACKSTAGE PASSES

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STUDENT GUIDE

HOW TO LOOK AT DANCE

To enjoy dance, you don't have to know about its background, or to "guess" at any facts about it. When you see Ballet Hispanico perform, here are some things you can watch (and listen) for. Examine this information, which is created and used by Ballet Hispanico to teach people about dance.

POSTURES AND GESTURES:

- What feelings or mood do the dancers' movements create? (Joyful, sad, angry, longing, playful?)
- Are the movements fast or slow, repetitious or changing, angular or curved?
- What parts of the body are used most? (arms, shoulders, back, hips, pelvis, legs?)
- Do the dancers appear "weighted" on the ground, or rather weightless, rising as high as possible?
- What gestures are repeated more than once? What do you think they might mean?

SPATIAL PATTERNS:

- What groupings do you see? (solos, duets, larger groups?) How do the groupings change?
- What "designs" do the dancers form onstage? (circles, lines, squares?) Do they move forward and back, across, on a diagonal? Are some of these patterns repeated?

MUSIC:

- What instrument(s) do you hear? Is there singing? In what language?
- Is the music fast or slow? Does it change during the dance? In what ways?
- If you close your eyes, what mood does the music create? How might you describe the music?

THEATRICAL EFFECTS:

- Besides the performers that you see, who else might have helped create this dance for the stage?
- Describe the stage set and the props. Is the setting realistic or abstract? Where do you think the setting is meant to be? (Outdoors, indoors, a formal occasion, a party, a funeral, a dream?)
- Does the lighting change during the piece? In what ways? How is the lighting used to help us understand the emotion or drama?
- What are the costumes? How do the costumes affect the impact of the dance?
- On the whole, does the dance narrate a story or convey emotions? Does it do both?
- How does it achieve its effects?

ALL ABOUT ■ MONDAY OCT 8, 2007 ■

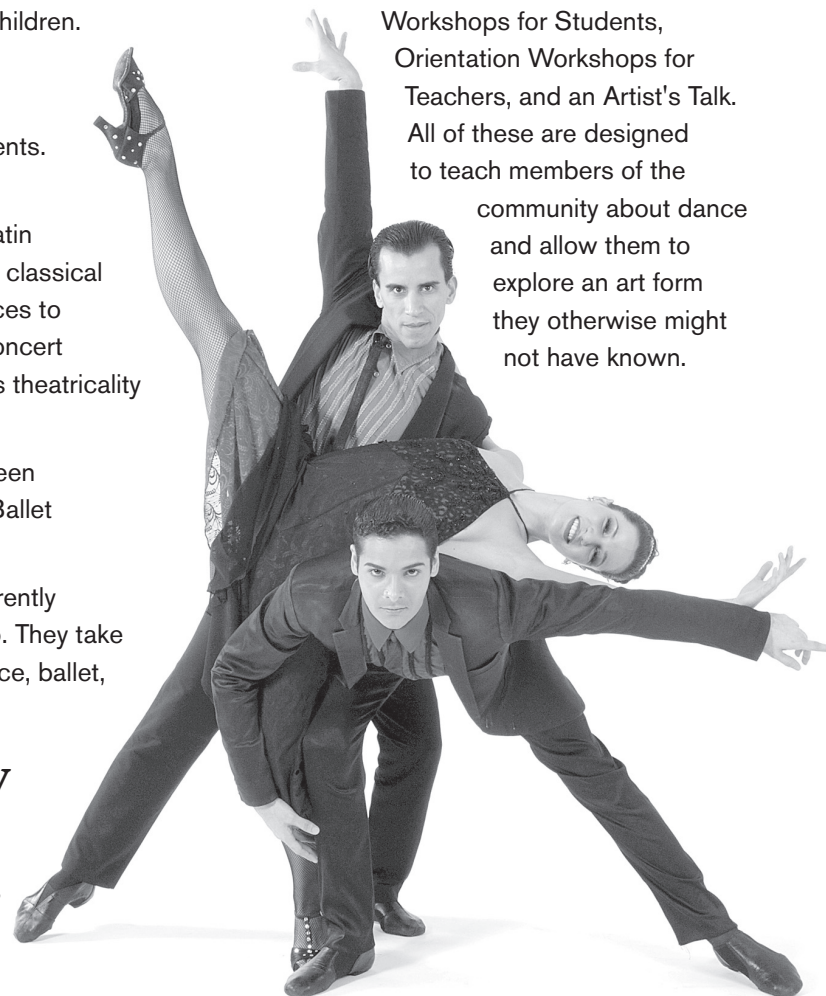
BALLET HISPANICO

Ballet Hispanico is a dance company like no other. It is situated on Manhattan's Upper West Side and has several dance studios and classrooms housed in two renovated carriage houses. Unlike a traditional ballet company, which might focus only on classical ballet, Ballet Hispanico has an ethnic focus. In addition to studying ballet, its dancers learn Latino style dancing and take classes while live musicians provide the entertainment. While a black leotard or pink tutu is not unheard of at Ballet Hispanico's school and studios, the company's innovative dancers find themselves wearing spunky Spanish-style street clothes, outfits that would not be out of place at a bullfight, and the simple garments of modern dance. Check out these fascinating facts about the company:

- Tina Ramirez, the artistic director of Ballet Hispanico, founded the company in 1970. Before officially establishing Ballet Hispanico, she was the director of Operation High Hopes, a dance training program for inner-city children.
- Ballet Hispanico has performed for 2 million people on three continents.
- Ballet Hispanico choreographers fuse Latin dance with elements of classical and contemporary dances to create a new form of concert dance that incorporates theatricality and passion.
- Over 77 pieces have been commissioned for the Ballet Hispanico company.
- Over 600 students currently attend Ballet Hispanico. They take classes in Spanish dance, ballet, and modern dance.
- Ballet Hispanico offers various programs in the community, including Performances for Young People, Latin Social Dance Classes, Master Classes, Movement Workshops for Students, Orientation Workshops for Teachers, and an Artist's Talk. All of these are designed to teach members of the community about dance and allow them to explore an art form they otherwise might not have known.

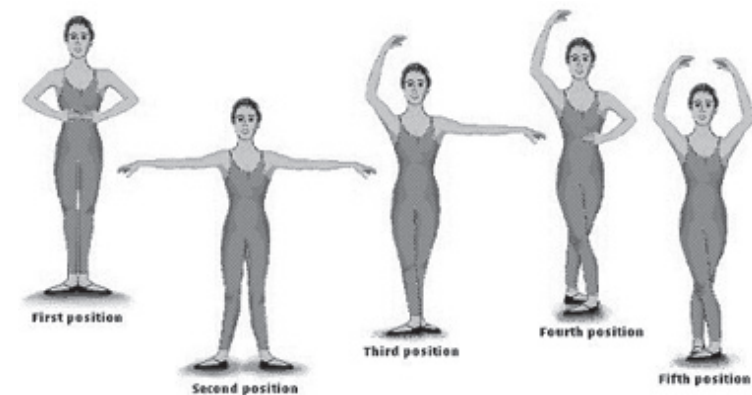
"Smashingly theatrical."

—Chicago Sun Times



Walk (Or Dance) in Someone Else's Shoes: The Five Positions of Ballet

Surely you have heard someone say that before you judge another person, you should walk a mile in their shoes. This could likely prove true for dancing as well. Before attending a ballet, try mastering the five basic positions that are the basis of all ballet dancing. Remember the bodily control that all ballet dancers strive for, and if this seems easy to you, challenge yourself. Many internet sites contain instructions for more advance ballet techniques. Research, and test yourself to see how far you can go. Practicing barefoot in front of a long mirror is best if you have no ballet shoes and have never watched yourself dance before.



FIRST POSITION

1. Stand upright with your feet together. Make your heels touch. Your left toes will face toward the left, and your right toes will face toward the right. Your feet nearly form a straight line except your toes point ever-so-slightly forward.
2. Place your arms in front of your body as though you are hugging a giant ball.
3. Press your shoulders down and elongate your neck.
4. Soften your fingers. No tension in your fingers is permitted.

SECOND POSITION

1. Begin in 1st position and move your legs a little beyond shoulder width apart.
2. Place your arms out to your sides at shoulder height. Your lower arms and hands will be facing forward slightly so that they are shy of a 180-degree angle.

THIRD POSITION

1. Stand in 1st position. Now move your right heel so that it touches the arch of your left foot. This is 3rd position.
2. You can also perform 3rd position on your left side. Again, begin in 1st position. This time move your left heel and place it so that it is touching your right arch.
3. Begin with your arms in 2nd position, now move your left arm overhead as though you are reaching up to pick an apple off a tree. Imagine a line going down the center of your body. Your left arm will never cross over that line.

FOURTH POSITION

1. Begin in 1st position. Move your right leg in front of your left leg so that your legs are apart. Your right toes point toward the right, left toes point toward the left. You could draw a straight line from the heel of your right foot to the toes of your left foot if you are doing this position properly.
2. Go back to 1st position. This time move your left foot forward and place it in front of your right foot. This is considered the left side of 4th position.
3. Place you arms as they were in 3rd position, now move only your right arm out in front of you like it was in 1st position hugging a beach ball.

FIFTH POSITION

1. Begin in 4th position and slide your front leg back so that it is touching your back leg. If you began 4th position with your right leg in front, your right heel will be touching your left toes.
- As you can see, 3rd, 4th, and 5th positions can all be done on either side. There is a left-side and right-side variation to each of these positions. With 1st and 2nd positions, there is only one way to do these.
2. Begin with your arms in 4th position and move your right arm overhead just as your left arm already is positioned.



BALLET BACKGROUND 101

Before watching a ballet, it helps to know the history and development of the dance. Ballet is a very old art form, but you will still notice commonalities with other dance forms, even very modern ones. The training a ballet dancer receives is rigorous, and making the dance look easy is quite hard. Because of the strength and control that ballet instills in dancers, it is sometimes studied by other professional athletes, including ice skaters and football players. Complete the activity below to see what you already know about ballet.

TRUE OR FALSE { see back for answers }

1. The first ballet was performed in Paris in 1581.
2. King Louis XIV of France, the Sun King, actually gained his nickname from a part he danced in a ballet.
3. The first ballet was called the Ballet of the Swans.
4. Food has never been served during a ballet.
5. Women rarely performed in professional ballets before 1681.
6. Despite their tremendous skill and reputation, Russian ballet companies, such as the famed Bolshoi and Kirov never performed in the US before 1956. Political and government issues kept them at home.
7. The word ballet itself comes from the Latin word ballere, which means "to dance."
8. The official language of ballet is Italian.
9. Dancers began doing the pointe work that is now considered a standard part of ballet in the 1800's.
10. Ballet dancers perform many movements that are unnatural for the body, but appear natural when executed properly.

Dancing, Spanish Style

Ballet Hispanico is more than a ballet company. Due to their infusion and sampling of modern and Spanish dance styles, to appreciate Ballet Hispanico is also to know a bit about its Spanish dance roots. There are four major forms of Spanish dance, and each is characterized by unique costuming, props, and musical accompaniment.

Style of Dance	Geographical Connections	Dance Steps Featured	Props Used	Costuming	What it Looks Like
Folkloric	Many exist, each Iberian region has its own for and influences	Complex steps dominate, and patterns are common	Wooden shoes, water pitchers, maypoles, stilts, swords, and kerchiefs	Traditional regional clothing	
Escuela bolero	Northern Spain	Elegant moves associated with 18 th century dance, especially ballet. Jumping and flying moves are show pieces	Wooden clappers called castanets	Performed in soft slippers called zapatillas	
Andalusian	Specific to the region of Andalusia in southern Spain	Males have uplifted chest and back, woman show fluid sensuous arm movements	Wooden clappers called castanets	Fashions are gypsy inspired and involve many veils	
Flamenco	Often associated with Gypsies	Highly energetic movements, singing and clapping that involves the audience are included, improvisation is also a part of this dance	Castanets used, and guitarists and live singers are also part of the performance	Female dancers wear flamingo-like make-up and full skirts that become part of their dance	

Test Yourself After completing this study guide, you should be able to answer all of the questions below. Try your hand at filling in all the blanks in the ten questions listed below. Each answer can be found in the word search puzzle.

A O R S D I Z Z C V G A A V O
O T T A E O P H M C D H L X W
V E L W I C O H U Y O T O V P
P G X Y F L O F T P K E B T C
Y X Y S U H E N Q J Z R A C O
T J J F C T Y P D X R F R D X
H V C N V L Z Z P G D F A O D
S T E N A T S A C O Z U P A W
B R P O I N T E M K C F I C J
F X S U T U T V O A I L W I G
O T J N C H L Q D V Y C K U O
Q U W Y D R F D E A R P E L D
L E B T G Z G I R F G I T H I
E E L W A S X H N N D B U E U
J M W Z K Q O L P P O D Q J T

1. The official language of ballet is _____.
 2. When a dancer performs on his or her toes, they are on _____.
 3. A dancer's feet are turned out, slightly wider than shoulder width, and arms are extended at the shoulder in _____ position.
 4. Ballet Hispanico blends ballet with Latin and _____ dances.
 5. Many years ago, _____ was served during a ballet.
 6. A professional ballerina must practice _____.
 7. Wooden clappers called _____ are used as props in many kinds of Latin dances.
 8. This ballet features a life-size, dancing doll. _____.
 9. The arc that a dancer's body makes as it sails through the air is called a _____.
 10. Although traditional ballerinas wear pouffy _____, Ballet Hispanico dresses its dancers in a variety of costumes. _____
- { see back for answers }

CHECKLIST: Becoming a Great Ballerina

Think you have what it takes to become a great ballerina? It's definitely about more than pink point shoes. Try out the checklist below to see what does into making a great dancer.

_____ Take joy in controlling your body and using it expressively to convey stories to others.

_____ A serious student--one who plans a professional dancing career--may be taking three to six lessons a week by the age of 12.

_____ Daily practice is necessary once a dancer becomes a professional. It is difficult for a dancer to practice at home, and most dancers go to a studio and enroll in a class. Practice requires the space of a studio, and a piano accompaniment is helpful.

_____ All dancers must have a strong, flexible body that responds to all commands. A dancer must be willing to exercise and control their diet as necessary to stay in shape.

_____ Desirable physical characteristics for a ballet dancer include long arms and legs, a long neck, and a comparatively short torso.

_____ Ideal dancers also have certain mental characteristics. They have a feeling for rhythm and an understanding of music. They are aware of the relationships between objects in space so that they can move exactly in any direction on the stage.

_____ Like good actors, dancers can express a mood and make a character believable.

_____ Above all, they love ballet and dedicate themselves to it completely. Otherwise, they could not train their bodies to move beautifully and expressively in unnatural ways.

The Parabola: The Physics of a Jump

Ballet dancers grow up familiar with the word ballon, and if you have seen any ballet at all, you might know something about ballon as well. Simply put, ballon is something like the related word "balloon." Ballon refers to a dancer's ability to hang in the air, suspended as if they had wings. This ability comes more naturally to some dancers than others, and though attempting flight is not natural for the human body, an accomplished ballerina can use their body to make this move seem natural. Consider this: the body of a dancer moving through the air in a jump is like a parabola, the shape, or arc, that a ball makes when it is thrown. Here's a simple explanation, minus the mathematical formulas. If a dancer can put enough momentum into their jump so that they throw their body like a ball, they travel up, and can maintain the illusion of hanging in air by extending their arms and legs. The only force acting on a dancer in mid-air is gravity, but gravity remains a powerful force. Therefore, dancers must land very carefully, with bent knees and while rolling the foot from toe to heel. This is not easy to do, it must be taught by a trained professional and is not for the amateur to try at home. However, if that same amateur so desired, he or she could do mathematical equations calculating the focus and directrix of this curve.

This dancer knows how to work her parabola. What incredible ballon!



FAMOUS FACES

Great Things Start at Ballet Hispanico...

In a word, Ballet Hispanico ROCKS! And if you have any doubt, check out these rather famous alumni. What other school can claim one of television's first non-white cop show stars, a bilingual girl who played a saint, and a clothing designer/singer/actress/restaurant owner?

Michael DeLorenzo

- Danced in the videos for Michael Jackson's "Beat It" and Lionel Richie's "Dancing on the Ceiling"
- Appeared in *Fame* (the movie version) and went on to appear in the television series version of *Fame* as well
- Other film credits include *Mi Familia* and *A Few Good Men*
- Frequent guest star on television programs like *CSI*



Leelee Sobieski

- Nominated for an Emmy and a Golden Globe for her role as *Joan of Ark*
- Films include *Never Been Kissed*, *Here on Earth*, *Deep Impact*, and *Jungle 2 Jungle*
- Performed for famed director Stanley Kubrick
- Speaks French, and has made movies and a mini-series filmed in that language



Jennifer Lopez

- One of the original Fly Girls on *In Living Color*
- Albums include *On the 6*, *J-Lo*, *Rebirth*, and *Como Ama Una Mujer*
- Named on the 100 Most Influential Hispanics by *People en Espanol*
- Has produced clothing and perfume lines
- Currently appearing in the film *El Cantante*



Do's & Don'ts OF GOOD THEATER BEHAVIOR

The Basic rule of behavior: Theater behavior falls somewhere in between that expected for a church and a movie. If you wouldn't do it in one of the above don't do it here.

THEATER ETIQUETTE

DO turn your cell phone off.

DON'T eat or drink in the theater unless refreshments are sold there.

DO sit in your assigned seat.

DO arrive on time.

DON'T disturb those around you (even if you are bored).

DON'T sing along at an opera or musical.

DON'T shout rude things at the performers. Treat them as you would want to be treated if you were onstage.

DON'T forget to enjoy yourself and learn new things.

DO remain in your seat until intermission.

DO clap at the end of an act, a scene, after a wonderful moment called a "show-stopper", or at the end of a production. If you are unsure, clap when others do.



Good Theater Behavior: Reviewing the 10 COMMANDMENTS



- ACROSS**
- Clap at the end of a _____.
 - Good theater behavior falls between that expected for a _____ and for a movie theater.
 - Always remember to _____ new things.
 - Clap after an especially amazing part in the play called a "show-_____."
 - The only time you should leave your _____ is during intermission.
 - Your _____ should always be turned off.
- DOWN**
- _____ on time.
 - If you are unsure of when to clap, clap when _____ do.
 - Clap at the end of a _____.
 - Never eat or _____ unless refreshments are sold in the theater.
 - Pay attention during the production. Even if you are not interested, sit _____ to avoid disturbing others.
 - Always remember to _____ yourself.
 - Do not _____ along at an opera or musical.

SPECIAL THANKS TO



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BALLET HISPANICO
STUDENT PERFORMANCE
 MONDAY
 OCTOBER 8
 10:30 AM

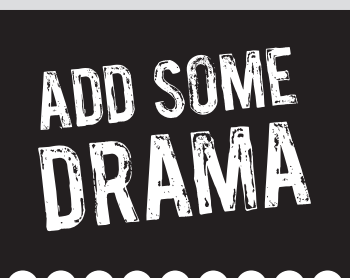
EVENING PERFORMANCE
 SUNDAY
 OCTOBER 7
 7:30 PM

ANSWERS TO "Test Yourself"

- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| 1. French | 6. Daily |
| 2. Pointe | 7. Castanets |
| 3. Second | 8. Coppelia |
| 4. Modern | 9. Parabola |
| 5. Food | 10. Tutus |

ANSWERS TO "Ballet Background 101"

- True –or at least the first record of a ballet hails from that time.
- True
- False –The first ballet was called "The Queen's Ballet Comedy"
- False –Once upon a time, food was always served to the noble audience of a ballet. Often, the dance presented introduced the food that was about to be eaten.
- True – men wearing masks often took the women's roles
- True
- True
- False –The official language is French, and the fact that all the steps are named in French allows dancers to take a class anywhere in the world and still understand what they are expected to perform.
- True –Pointe shoes were developed at this time and allowed dancers to rise up onto their toes when performing.
- True –One could say this is true of other forms of dance as well, but especially so of ballet.



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