

Modern Dance

- ❖ Dance has always been a means of expressing man's thoughts and feelings about life. Modern dance is a product of the twentieth century. It began as a rejection of what its advocates (Isadora Duncan etc.,) saw as the formalism and sterility of the traditional ballet.
- ❖ Modern dance is the art form that uses the human body to express an idea or emotion. Its purpose is to use human movement to give outer expression to inner feelings.
- ❖ In Modern Dance the choice of movement is determined by the idea of the choreographer, not a traditional vocabulary of movement; thus modern dance is a highly individualized form of expression
- ❖ Modern Dance intends to communicate through the medium of body movement the expression of ideas. The body is your instrument.

Types of Movement:

- **Locomotor** – movement through space. Ex: Walks, runs, leaps, hops, jumps, skips, gallops and slides.
- **Axial** – movement of the body around its own axis from a stationary base. Ex: Swinging, rotating, bending and stretching.

Elements of Movement:

- **Space** – where movement is occurring
 - **Personal** – that space into which parts of the body can extend in all directions from a stationary base.
 - Straight lines – horizontal or vertical
 - Angular
 - Curved
 - Twisted
 - Symmetrical – balanced, even design.
 - Asymmetrical – unbalanced design
 - **General** – design made by a whole group in space. Ex: circle or square.
- **Direction:**
 - **Floor Pattern** – (pathways)
 - Forward, backward
 - Sideways
 - Diagonal
 - Circular
 - Up and down
 - **Combinations of any of the above resulting in:**
 - Zigzag lines
 - Right angles
 - Squares
 - Arcs

- **Level:**
 - On the floor
 - Kneeling
 - Standing
 - Elevation
- **Range:**
 - Large – far from the center of body
 - Small – near to the body
- **Focus** – indication of a fixed or moving point in space by the direction of gaze or movement.
- **Relationship of individuals:**
 - Close together
 - Far apart
 - Approaching
 - Parting
 - Facing
 - Side by side
 - Shadowing
 - Mirroring
 - Leading
 - Following
 - Moving in unison
 - Moving in opposition
 - Moving one after another – succession
 - Supporting
 - Being supported
- **Time** – how is movement occurring relative to duration
 - Quality – fast, hurried, sudden or slow leisurely, sustained.
 - Musical elements – tempo, rhythmic pattern
- **Force** – how movement is occurring relative to release of energy (effort)
 - **Force or weight**
 - Firm, strong, heavy
 - Fine, delicate, light
 - **Flow**
 - Bound or controlled, movement that can be stopped at any movement
 - Free or abandoned, movement that cannot be stopped once started
 - **Qualities**
 - Swinging
 - Sustained
 - Percussive
 - Suspended
 - Vibratory
 - Collapse

MODERN DANCE TERMS

Modern Dance - the art form that uses the human body to express an idea, emotion, mood or simply the beauty of movement. Its purpose is to use human movement to give outer expression to inner feelings.

Arabesque – position of the body supported on one leg, free leg extended backward at a right angle, arms held in various positions to create a long line from fingertips to toes.

Axial – non-locomotor movement occurring above a stationary base; movement of the body around its own axis.

Battement – a beating movement of the free leg from a forward, sideward or backward position.

Brush – a lifting action of the free leg forward, backward or sideward. The foot brushes the floor as the leg is lifted.

Centered – the correct balancing of the body.

Chasse – “Chasing”, one foot chases the other.

Collapse – a movement involving the release of tension in the entire body or any of its parts where gravity is allowed to take over; a loss of physical and emotional energy.

Contraction – the muscular tension that produces a foreshortening of body parts; a principle of the Graham technique.

Degage – “to disengage”, the working leg opens either to a point tendu or en l'air position.

Downstage – a stage direction to indicate movement toward the audience.

Elevation – a movement that lifts the body or any of its parts into the air.

Extension – an elongation or lengthening of the body or any of its parts.

Flexion – a bending movement; a contraction of the muscles that brings two body parts closer together; opposite of extension.

Floor Pattern – an imaginary design made on the floor by moving from one place to another.

Focus – indication of a fixed or moving point in space by the direction of gaze or movement.

Jete – a leap.

Leap - movement of elevation from a push-off of one foot with a landing on the opposite foot.

Level – the altitude of a movement in relationship to its distance from the floor; high, medium, low.

Locomotor – movement through space involving a change of location from one place to another (walk, run, leap, etc.)

Non-locomotor – axial movement (bend, twist, stretch, etc.)

Percussive – a quality characterized by quick, sharp, aggressive movements; energy is applied with sudden force and then quickly checked.

Placement – a balanced alignment of the body; hips level, legs turned out from the hip joints, rib cage lifted, shoulders relaxed downward, spine extended.