

The San Francisco Ballet Center for Dance Education

# Out of the Wings

A Study Guide Series for Classroom Teachers

## Dance-IT:

Dance and Information Technology

See the World of Dance in a New Way  
An Interactive Digital Media Installation



## Mission Statement



The mission of San Francisco Ballet is to share our joy of dance with the widest possible audience in our community and around the globe, and to provide the highest caliber of dance training in our School. We seek to enhance our position as one of the world's finest dance companies through our vitality, innovativeness and diversity and through our uncompromising commitment to artistic excellence based in the classical ballet tradition.

Katita Waldo in Balanchine's  
*Symphony in C*.  
© Lloyd Englert, 2001.

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## About this Guide

### **Hello and welcome to the Study Guide for Dance-IT, Dance and Information Technology.**

This Study Guide is meant to both inform and educate you about the Installation Dance-IT, and about the different dance forms included in this project.

In April 2008, the San Francisco Ballet Center for Dance Education (CDE) in collaboration with Media Arts Specialist, John Crawford from University of California, Irvine will present Dance-IT, an interactive digital media installation at the San Francisco Main Public Library. Aligning with San Francisco Ballet's vision of looking towards the future in its' 75th Anniversary season, CDE recognizes an opportunity to engage new and young audiences in the art form of dance using innovative new technologies.

The goal of this project is to explore a new way of experiencing dance using digital media; to create an interactive experience; and to allow individuals to explore the dancer inside themselves. Dance-IT participants will have an opportunity to WATCH, LEARN and DO! And, your creative movement skills will become part of the exhibition, as we record and change the way you see it. You can try out your Hip Hop moves, see authentic West African Dance, or learn about traditional Japanese dance forms. As you watch, learn and do, find out what inspires you!

There are as many different dance forms in the world as there are cultures. Each has its' own reasons and ways of moving. By studying world dance, we can learn about the differences and similarities between groups. As we learn, we can better understand and appreciate all the people and cultures of the world.

We hope you will enjoy learning about these different forms of dance and perhaps you'll even try out one of the dances in the Activities Section. Most of all, we hope you discover something new about the world of dance and something unique and special about yourself.

Embrace the dancer in you!

Best Wishes,  
Charles Mc Neal  
Director of Education

## What is Dance?

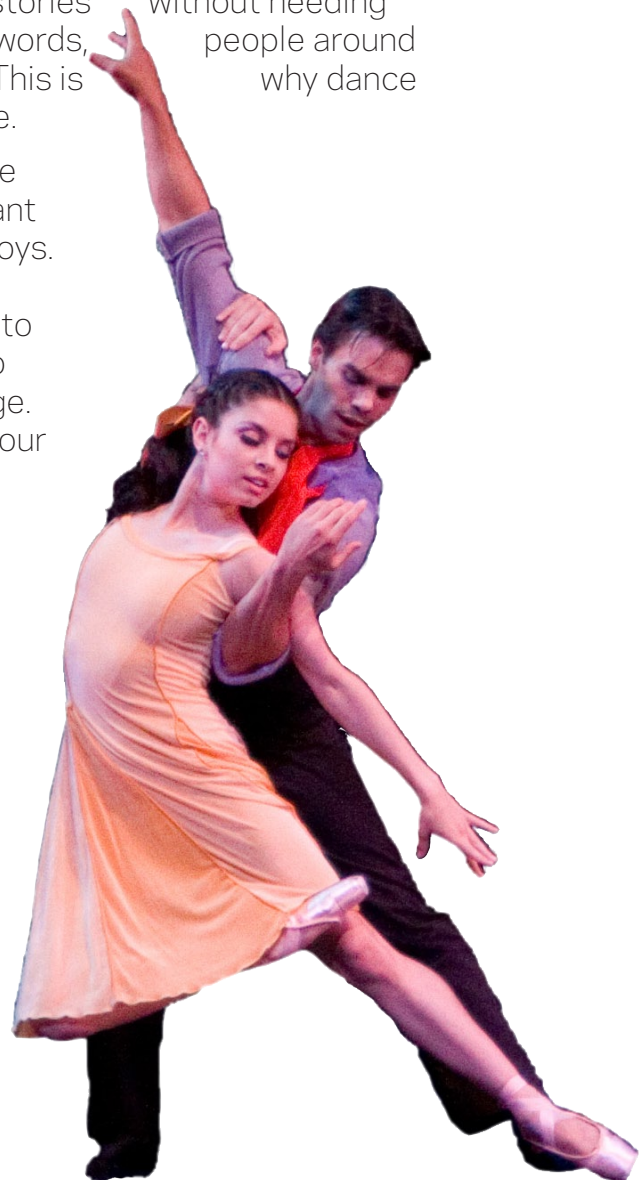
Bending, stretching, jumping, and turning are all activities dancers do. They work hard to transform these everyday movements into the language of dance, using each step as a word to compose first a phrase, then a sentence, a paragraph, and finally a story, or an expression of a feeling such as joy, sadness, anger, or love. This is one of the greatest forms of communication we have available to us.

Through movement and facial expressions dancers learn to convey emotions and sometimes even entire stories without needing to speak out loud. Since dance uses no words, people around the world understand and respond to it. This is why dance is sometimes called a universal language.

Movement to music is a natural response to our enjoyment of sounds. Even an infant begins bobbing his head to music he enjoys. There are many different types and variations of dancing from tribal dances to swing dancing, from hip hop at a party to a classical ballet on an opera house stage. Dance is a wonderful way of expressing our joy of life.

You might explore how to communicate an emotion through movement yourself. Notice how different music inspires unique motion, especially from children.

All dance is a valid form of expression.



Dores Andre and Joan Boada  
in Wheeldon's *Carousel (A Dance)*®.  
© Erik Tomasson, 2007.



## Jarabe Tapatio

**Continent:** North America

**Country:** Mexico

**Capital:** Mexico City

**Language:** Spanish

**Costume:** Wealthy women during the mid 1800s were known to purchase fabric known as “castor” imported from the Philippines on a ship named the “Nao de China” to make skirts for their female servants thus giving rise to the name *China Poblana* as the dress worn by the female companion in the dance *Jarabe Tapatio*. The dresses are rich in color and with wide-bodied skirts, adorned with bright ribbons. The *Charro* suit worn by men is decorated with silver buttons which was influenced by the emergence of the Mariachi around 1930.



**History:** Jarabe Tapatio has been influenced by different cultures, particularly Spanish. During the 19th century the high society in Mexico were dancing many traditionally European dances from Spain and France such as “Zapateado”(footwork, stamping and tapping), “Seguidillas”(a Spanish folk dance) and “Gavote”(a French folk dance). After Mexico gained its independence from European control, patriotic songs became popular and the incorporation of Spanish “Zapateado” found its way into what is now known as “Jarabe Tapatio.”

*Jarabe Tapatio* is the most widely recognized dance coming from Mexico. It became so popular that it was known as the “National Folk Dance” of Mexico. This “Hat Dance” as it’s also named is a courting dance between men and women where the man persist in inviting the woman into a courtship while the woman remains coy while flirting with the man. This tension builds until there’s a love partnership between the two. The word “jarabe” means “syrup” or “elixir” in Spanish and “tapatio” is a name for person that is from Guadalajara, the biggest city in the region of Jalisco. The music that accompanies this dance is the “Mariachi”.



Photo courtesy of John Crawford

## Afro-Cuban: Dances of the Orisha

**Continents:** Africa and North America

**Countries:** West-African countries and Cuba

**Language:** Yoruba

**Costumes:** Afro-Cuban Orisha dances have many different types of costumes because each deity has their own type of costume and dance. Here are a few descriptions of some of the deities and the type of costume that is worn:



*Oshun* is the goddess of love, beauty and rivers. Her costume is an ample skirted dress that has many different hues of gold, honey and copper tones. Usually she wears a crown that is adorned in beads and glittered gems that hang over her face. Often times *Oshun* is seen with a mirror in her hand reflecting her symbol of beauty.

*Yemanya* is the goddess of the oceans and seas. Her costume consists of seven ample skirts to symbolize the seven oceans in colors that are reminiscent of ocean waters; blue, white and silver. She also wears a crown that is made of beads and shells that drape over her face. Often she is seen with a scepter in her hand to symbolize her stature as goddess of the oceans.

*Oya* is the goddess of the winds, fire and lightening and natural disasters. Her colors are maroon, dark reds and white. She also wears a round ample fitted skirt and wears a crown on her head draped in beads of red color. She is often seen holding a machete in one hand symbolizing her power to blaze through terrain and create to new path in the aftermath of destruction.

*Oggun* is the god of iron, war and labor. Typically, *Oggun's* costume consists of the colors black and green and his upper body remains bare while from the waist below he wears a skirt made of palm tree leaves called *mariwo*. He also wears a straw hat and a machete slung at his waist side. He also wears a necklace made of black and green beads.

**History:** The Orisha religion first began in Africa and was primarily practiced in the west and central regions of the continent by the Yoruba people. It is a religion that pays homage to the earth and the forces of nature. The central deity is *Olodumare* (the higher power, God) and then there are many gods, goddesses or deities that emanate from *Olodumare* symbolizing nature such as *Yemanya*, the goddess of the oceans.

During the slave trade the Yoruba people that were taken from Africa and brought to Cuba preserved the Orisha practice by integrating it with Catholicism which the slaves were made to convert to under Spanish control. In Cuba the mix of the Orisha religion and Catholicism took on the practice of what is now known as the *Santeria*. *Santeria* blended Catholicism with Orishas by taking a deity such as *Oshun*, the goddess of rivers and beauty and harmonizing her with the catholic saint Our Lady of Charity. Likewise, the god *Oggun* is harmonized with Saint Peter. Each deity has his or her own dance, music rhythm and costume that they wear. They also have customs such as specific colors, numbers and certain foods they enjoy. Today the Orisha is still practiced among followers throughout the world.



# Kathak

**Continent:** Asia

**Country:** India ( North)

**Capital:** New Delhi

**Language:** Derives from Sanskrit

**Costume:** Kathak costumes are a blend of Hindu and Muslim cultures. The traditionally Hindu female costume was a sari worn in everyday style. However, modernly the costume is made of a *lehenga-choli* combination. The *lehenga* is a loose ankle skirt and the *choli* is a close-fitting short-sleeved top. The Mughal costume for women has what's called an *angarkha* worn on the upper half of the body and a the skirt portion is round to create flare as dancer spins. The legs are covered with the *chudidaar*, a pant-like bottom. A belt made of *zari*, a type of gem is worn around the waist.

Traditional Hindu costume for the men was a bare chest with the lower body clothed by a *dhoti* that has many pleats and is tied in the Bengal style. The Mughal costume for men is the *kurta-churidar* which is usually knee-length. The men may also wear a small cap with their ensemble.

**History:** Kathak is a classical dance form originating from northern India. The word "kathak" derives from the Sanskrit word "katha" meaning story and "katthaka" is the name for a person who tells a story. These katthakas re-told and performed stories with elements of dance woven into their movements. Katthakas passed these dances down from generation to generation and there are records of these dances dating back to third and fourth centuries BC. Traditionally, Kattak was performed in temples as a religious practice. However, Kathak took on a new influence during the dawn of the Mughal Empire throughout the 15th century. Mughal is the Persian word for Mongol, which were the Central-Asian descendants of Genhgis-Khan. It was at this time that Kathak was introduced to the Mughal Court of India and this changed the art form from being performed in temples for only religious purposes to being performed for entertainment. Over time the Kathak was influenced by Persian culture stemming from the Mughal Empire, thus creating a modern form of Kathak that consisted of blends of Muslim and Hindu cultures.



Today, Kathak has two major techniques; *Nritta*, pure dance, developed more intricate footwork and fast pirouettes and more arabesque-like movements as a result of the Muslim influence of the Mughal Empire. The *Abhinaya*, art of expression, is characterized by subtle movements of the eyes, neck and hands.



## Modern Dance

**Origin:** United States and Europe

**Location:** Global

**Language:** Global

**Costume:** Generally there is no specific type of costume for modern dance but rather it is open to the interpretation and creative intention of choreographer or dancers in the production. Costumes in the past have included bare feet and legs to long flowing skirts or trousers allowing dancers free range of movement.



**History:** During the early 1900s a handful of dancers in Europe and the US sought to go against the traditional techniques of classical ballet by foregoing the classical training and opting to dance with bare feet these pioneers of modern dance practiced and performed what they called "free dance". In the US dancers such as Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, Jose Limon and Martha Graham. Francois Delsarte, Emile Jacques-Dalcroze and Rudolf von Laban laid the foundation for modern dance development throughout Europe. Perhaps one of the most influential of these early dancers was Isadora Duncan whom was known to perform in front of audiences wearing a tunic reminiscent of the fashion of ancient Greece and creating natural movement that was predominantly improvisational. By the end of the 1920s Martha Graham came onto the dance scene popularizing a different perspective on dance that concentrated on contractions of the abdominals and breath of the dancer to represent the human emotion. She devised a technique known as Graham technique that is widely used in the dance instruction today.

Modern dance was also integrated into traditional African and Caribbean dance styles. The most notable dancer and choreographer was Katherine Dunham who was the first to introduce American audiences to traditional Pan-African dance forms while blending them with modern and ballet techniques. Other notable dancers include Lester Horton, who developed the Horton technique, a technique that used to stretch and strengthen the human body in a variety of motions. Alvin Ailey was a student of Lester Horton who went on to establish the world-renowned Alvin Ailey Dance Theater in New York.

During the 1960s and 70s postmodern dance took center stage as it aimed to rebel against the constraints of modern dance and instead invoked the movement found in daily life while honing the idea that anyone was a dancer whether they had been trained in dance or not. A well-known postmodern dancer and choreographer is Merce Cunningham who is also known for combining dance with computer technology. Today modern dance has captured a new category, contemporary dance. Contemporary dance is a combination and embodiment of numerous styles and techniques derived from the work of Cunningham, Horton, Graham, Dunham, ballet, jazz, world dance and more.



Photo courtesy of John Crawford

## West African Dance

**Continent:** Africa

**Countries:** Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau

**Languages:** Ewe, Fanti, Gbe, Akan, Yoruba

**Costumes:** West African costumes vary depending on the dance that is being performed or what ceremony it is being performed in. Women may wear long wrapped skirts with a matching loose-fitting top and a special head wrap.

**History:** West African dance is arguably the most recognized form of African dancing known throughout the world. Since Africa is a large continent with many different countries there are many different ethnic groups of people who have developed cultures that have many unique qualities as well as similarities among each other in parts of North, South, Central and East Africa. Although there is no specific date for when West African dance began, it goes back many centuries. These traditional dances were done in communities to celebrate new harvest or crops, weddings, births and even funerals.

What all African dance forms have in common is that they are polycentric. This means that the body moves in a way such that different parts move separately from each other. To achieve this technique of "body isolations" a dancer may practice moving their head from side to side, moving their shoulders up and down or making circles with their hips in order to move that part of their body while keeping the others still. Generally, body isolations are done as a way to warm-up the body but it is also these isolations that become central to executing the African dance movements during a performance or ceremony.

In general African dance and particularly West African Dance is danced with high-energy to the sounds of polyrhythmic drums. Polyrhythm means taking different instruments and giving them each a different rhythm but playing each rhythm at the same time. The drums are an important and necessary component to West African dance because the beat



of the drums determine speed of the dancers movements and to signify the dancer to change to a different without stopping the flow of the dance. When a drummer speeds up or slows down the rhythm of their beat the dancer is expected to have a keen ear so that he or she can match the speed of their steps to that of the drummer. The pulse of the drums evokes strong emotions and conveys the feeling of the people in the community.

# Ballet

**Continent:** Origins in Europe, now global

**Country:** Origins in Italy and France, now global

**Languages:** Terminology is in French

**Costumes:** On stage the most recognized and classical costume for women is called a *tutu*. A *tutu* is a special type of skirt that is often made of layers of tulle material and fan out around the dancer's waist giving focus to her legs and feet as she dances on stage. When a young girl is first learning ballet she wears leotard that is usually black in color, pink-colored tights a long with ballet slippers or special shoes called *pointe* shoes that allow the ballerina to dance on top of her toes.

The costume for men when they perform ballet on stage generally consists of tights that usually match the color of their female partner's tutu or costume. On the upper body they wear a top that fits loosely enough for them to dance in and yet flows with their movements across the stage. When a young boy is first learning ballet he wears black tights, white shirt and white ballet slippers on their feet.

**History:** Ballet began as an entertaining spectacle in the royal courts of Italy and France during the Renaissance. In fact, the word "ballet" comes from the Italian word *ballare*, which means "to dance." Early ballets were performed in ballrooms with speaking and singing as well as dancing, and the performers were members of the courts.

At first all the dancers were men. Women first appeared on stage in 1681, still wearing the long heavy dresses of the time. To make their movements easier and more visible, they began to shorten their skirts, and remove the hoops underneath as well as the wigs and heels. But it was when the women began to dance en pointe (on the tips of their toes) that they became more popular than men. This period is known as the Romantic Era, when most ballets used the lights, delicate effect of pointe work to tell stories about fairies and other supernatural beings.

In the 1930s Americans embraced ballet, and many of the great Russian artists emigrated here. Among them was George Balanchine, who founded New York City Ballet and its school. Another was Adolf Bolm, the first director of San Francisco Opera Ballet, later renamed San Francisco Ballet. With the arrival of these Russian dancers, American interest in ballet grew and affiliated company schools flourished. Nowadays, every major American city has a ballet company and an accompanying school to train the dancers of tomorrow.

Since its beginning, the art of ballet has continued to evolve. Today, ballet combines the proficient technique of dancers with modern and ethnic movements to create new dance styles encompassing a variety of inspirations. These unique elements will always be instrumental in entertaining and capturing the imagination of every audience member, like you!

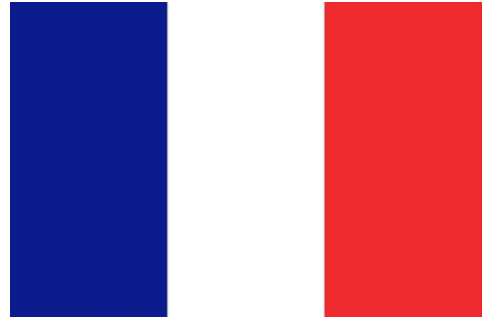


Photo courtesy of John Crawford

## Japanese Folk Dance

**Continent:** Asia

**Country:** Japan

**Capital:** Tokyo

**Language:** Japanese

**Costumes:** the most recognizable traditional Japanese costume is the *Kimono* which translates to mean “clothing” in Japanese. The two main elements of the *Kimono* are the dress, or bulk of the material covering the body and the *Obi* sash which is placed around the waist. Modernly *Kimonos* are worn by women only for special occasions such as weddings or in traditional dances. Because there is a particular way that the *Kimono* sash must be tied some women who are not familiar with how to tie the *Kimono* will ask the help of elder women or take a special course at a *Kimono* school.

**History:** Traditional Japanese dance, like many folk dances from around the world developed out of the daily lives of people and the communities in which they lived. These early dances often had a spiritual component and were performed to give praise to a God or Higher Being. They were also danced to celebrate a plentiful new harvest, to find a special mate or to get rid of negative spirits or feelings.

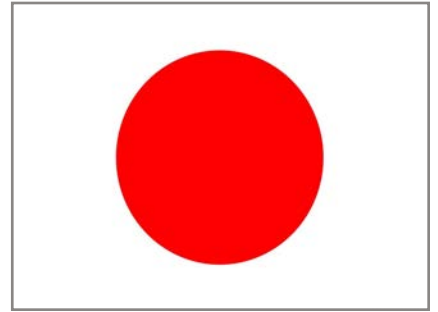
There are many traditional Japanese dances that are performed throughout Japan, but one of the most popular dances is the Bon Dance or “Bon Odori” which is performed during the Bon Festival every summer in cities all over the country. The Bon Festival is also commonly referred to as the “Feast of the Dead” or “Feast of Lanterns” and it is done to honor and commemorate the ancestors or people that have passed away and taking time to remember their spirit. The Bon Dance is performed at night because it is believed in the Japanese tradition that the spirit of their ancestors return during the night.

A specific form of Bon Dance is the *Tokyo Dontaku*. This dance is performed with the dancer taking small steps with the feet while the arms and hands move about gracefully. Another traditional Japanese dance is the *Iyomanzai* which is performed during the New Year as a way

of asking the gods to bestow a prosperous and harmonious new year.

The *Ayakomai* is a dance that dates back to 500 years and is a spiritual dance thanking the gods for all their blessings.

The *Sakura* is a dance that is often done by women to celebrate the coming of the cherry blossoms on trees signifying the start of Spring.



# Hip Hop Dance

**Continents:** Africa, North America, Global

**Countries:** Global

**Languages:** Global

**Costumes:** Dancers usually wear loose fitting street clothes that change with the trends in fashion. Today it would be common to see both men and women wearing jeans with designer inspired tops and jackets. Hip Hop dancers also like to accessorize with jewelry and hats and common colors worn are red, black, green and gold which shows the influence of Jamaican-Reggae culture and the African-American community.



**History:** Although the early beginnings of Hip Hop developed in the United States, particularly in New York City during the 1970s, the origins of Hip Hop come from West Africa. When slaves were brought from portions of West Africa to the Americas, some of the people brought were known as griots or storytellers that passed oral tradition down from generation to generation. The oral traditions of the griots was able to survive slavery by transforming into songs and dances preserved by slaves.

Hip Hop dancing and culture began as a rebellion against the popular cultural phenomenon, Disco. Many of New York's inner city African-American and Latino youth disliked the sounds and moves of Disco and instead wanted to continue listening to the beats of classic Seventies funk. These young kids would gather in community parks and recreational centers to listen to funk music being played by up and coming DJs. These DJs manipulated the beat patterns of a song by repeatedly playing the music inbetween the verses of a song, known as "beat-break deejaying". As the DJs played, people in the crowd would begin moving their bodies in sync to the percussive sound of the beat or breaks in the rhythm. Their dynamic and energetic moves accompanied with acrobatic isolations of the body gave birth to the term known as break dancing. These break dancers also became known as b-boys and b-girls. The somewhat combative style of break dancing has influences from the Afro-Brazilian martial art known as *Capoeira*. James Brown known as the "godfather of soul" also had a tremendous impact on breaking dancing styles. He popularized fast moving footwork during his dance interludes inbetween the transgressions of his songs that has found its way into break dancing and Hip Hop choreography.

While this new subculture was developing on the East coast in New York, Don Campbell in Los Angeles was pioneering another new form of dancing called "popping" or "pop-locking"- a spin off from a dance

called "Funky Chicker". Pop locking is a way in which a dancer moves by 'locking' or isolating the joints of their arms, legs, hips and shoulders. The blending of these urban subcultures initiated the cultural phenomenon known collectively as Hip Hop today. Hip Hop dance continues to evolve garnering influence from different cultures around the world. Hip Hop music is now sung in many languages and the dance moves have been mixed with traditional world dance giving rise to contemporary Hip Hop versions such as Reggaeton which mixes Latin dance moves with Hip Hop. There have been social movements within Hip Hop such as Underground Hip Hop a more politically conscience form that came about as a response to commercial Hip Hop.



Photo courtesy of John Crawford



## Polynesian Dance

**Continent:** South Pacific, Asia

**Countries:** Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Tahiti, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Micronesia, Hawaii, Easter Island, New Zealand, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands

**Languages:** Togan, Samoan, Niuean

**Costumes:** The common types of costumes worn by female Hawaiian dancers is a colorful wrap skirt or dress or like in Tahitian dance, the women wear skirts that are grass-like or made of leaves with a bra-like top made from gourds with a large headdress or with many beautiful, bright flowers in their hair and around their necks and wrists and ankles. The men often wear either a shorter wrap skirt or a skirt also made of grass-like material. It is also common for men to wear a crown made of leaves and around their necks and wrists and ankles.

**History:** Traditional dances from the South Pacific arose as a reflection of the daily lives of people, much like many other traditional dances from around the world. These dances portrayed celebrations of life, giving thanks to the gods and initiating a new chief. During the 1800s while British missionaries were in the South Pacific many of these traditional dances depicting daily life were forbidden and as a result much of the Polynesian culture went into decline. However, in the early part of the 20th century these dances were again being performed among the indigenous people.

Perhaps the most recognized type of Polynesian dance is the *hula*, which comes from Hawaii. *Hula* was traditionally performed only by men and was seen as a religious dance done as a prayer set to the rhythm of chanted songs. Due to western influence however, *hula* is often performed by women, though men still take part. Though it still retains its spiritual essence, *hula* is also performed for entertainment. Tahitian dancing is also a form of Polynesian dance that incorporates quick moving hips of the female dancers called *tamure*. The powerful drumming accompanies and accentuates the rapid movement of the dancers.

The dances from the Cook Islands bear many similarities to the Tahitian dances however, on these islands the dancers' hip movements are more subtle than that of the Tahitian dancers and there are usually more drums that are used that have different pitches giving more contrast and dynamics to the music.



In Samoa a popular dance that is performed is known as the *fiafia* dance which is done by both men and women and includes slow and elegant movements. The Togan dance *lakalaka* is a traditional dance performed, usually by a young woman, with slow and fluid movements.

In Fiji, a dance known as *meke* is generally performed in large groups. Some of the dancers sit on the floor while moving with their hands while in other dances such as the spear dance, they perform standing up as they move to the rhythm of the bamboo poles.

## Check Your Understanding

Now that you have had the chance to read some detailed information about different types of dance from around the world, it's time to check your understanding! Try to first answer the questions below from memory. If you need some help, simply refer back to the World Dance History Pages.

1. The music that accompanies the dance "Jarabe Tapatio" is known as:
  - a) Jalisco
  - b) Mariachi
  - c) Zapateado
  - d) Elixir
2. Dances of the Orisha are part of the religion known as:
  - a) Ogun
  - b) Catholicism
  - c) Yoruba
  - d) Santeria
3. The two major techniques used in Kathak dance are:
  - a) Hindu & Muslim
  - b) Lehenga & Choli
  - c) Nritta & Abhinaya
  - d) Bengal & Mughal
4. The choreographer most well known for blending African and Caribbean dance styles with modern dance is:
  - a) Martha Graham
  - b) Jose Limon
  - c) Isadora Duncan
  - d) Katherine Dunham
5. In West African dance, dancers often move different parts of their body separately from one another. This technique is called:
  - a) Polycentric
  - b) Polyrhythm
  - c) Yoruba
  - d) Fanti
6. The official language used in Classical Ballet is:
  - a) Italian
  - b) English
  - c) French
  - d) German
7. In Japan, the Bon Festival is done to:
  - a) Celebrate their harvest
  - b) Commemorate their ancestors
  - c) Celebrate the New Year
  - d) Give thanks for one's possessions
8. Hip Hop dancing includes the following style of dance:
  - a) Pop-locking
  - b) Break dancing
  - c) Free-Style
  - d) All of the above
9. The quick moving of hips in Polynesian dance is called:
  - a) Fiafia
  - b) Meke
  - c) Lakalaka
  - d) Tamure

## Folk Dances

On the following pages are instructions for three cultural dances from different parts of the world including The Caribbean, Mexico and Japan. These dances are fun and easy to do. Try them by yourself, with a friend, with your family, or in the classroom with your students. Any way you choose, everyone will have a great time while learning something new!

### Bele Kawe: Traditional African-Caribbean Folk Dance

*Bela Kawe is a traditional African-Caribbean folk dance that is one of many highlife dances from West African and Caribbean culture. This dance tells a story of two women who are having a friendly competition for a man's attention. The first part of the dance represents the women trying to get the man's attention, while the last part represents the warding off of any bad spirits that may be standing in the woman's way.*

*There are many different versions of Bela Kawe. This dance can be performed in lines of people or in a circle. The legs remain bent during the whole dance and the body has a feeling of being "grounded". The upper body should move freely and the whole dance should have a feeling of energy or vibrancy.*

Music: Traditional Song: Bele Kawe  
Traditional African-Caribbean Music

#### Part 1: Triple Step - 8 times (16 counts)

Women are holding up long ruffled skirts. Men put their hands in their back pockets.

Step forward on the right foot  
Step back on the left foot  
Bring right foot back together with left foot

Step forward on the left foot  
Step back on the right foot  
Bring left foot back together with right foot

Continue to alternate the triple step from right side to left side 8 times  
Be sure to include the natural movement of the hips while doing the triple step.

#### Part 2: Heel Steps - 8 times (16 counts)

Arms swing out to the side of the body, following the foot in use.  
The upper body contracts with this motion.

Touch right heel out to the side  
Bring right foot back together with left foot

Touch left heel out to the side  
Bring left foot back together with right foot

#### Part 3: Three Step Turn - 4 times (16 counts)

Step right, left, right while turning low and wide to the right  
Touch left foot out to the side and throw arms to the right side of the body

Step left, right, left while turning low and wide to the left  
Touch right foot out to the side and throw arms to the left side of the body

## Los Machetes: Mexican Harvest Dance

*Los Machetes is a popular folk dance from the Jalisco region of Mexico. This dance tells the story of cutting down sugar cane during the harvest. Los Machetes was created by Mexican farm workers who spent a great amount of time perfecting the use of the tool, the machete, for harvesting. Traditionally, real machetes are used while performing this dance, however in this version, the hands are used to represent the knives.*

*Los Machetes works best when performed with partners moving side by side in a circular formation. This dance is performed to music by a Mariachi orchestra and has a great sense of joy and energy.*

### Part 1: Marches (32 counts)

Partners march side by side, clapping hands overhead 16 times moving counter-clockwise.

Partners turn and repeat in opposite direction, marching & clapping clockwise 16 times.

### Part 2: Away / Together - 4 times (16 counts)

Partners turn to face one another and walk back 4 times and forward 4 times. Repeat 4 times total.

### Part 3: Hand Pattern - 2 times (16 counts)

- (1) Partners clap hands to one another
- (2) Clap own hands under raised right knee
- (3) Clap own hands in front of body
- (4) Clap own hands under raised left knee
- (5) Clap own hands in front of body
- (6) Clap own hands behind body
- (7 & 8) Clap own hands in front of body three times quickly

Repeat this pattern for a second time.

### Part 4: Turns - 4 times (32 counts)

Partners do 4 elbow turns with one another, alternating right side and left side. Each elbow turn uses 8 counts total.

Begin dance pattern again with Part 1 and repeat whole dance 3 times total.

Music: There are several versions of the song Los Machetes available. Recommended version:

Song: Los Machetes  
Artist: Mariachi Nuevo Tecalitlan  
Album: Folklorico Mexicano



Photo courtesy of John Crawford

## Toyko Dontaku: Japanese Folk Dance

*Tokyo Dontaku is a "Bon Odori" dance which is performed during the Bon Festival every summer in cities all over Japan. The Bon Festival is also commonly referred to as the "Feast of the Dead" or "Feast of Lanterns" and it is held annually to honor and commemorate ancestors or people that have passed away. The Bon Dances are performed in the evening because it is believed in the Japanese tradition that the spirit of their ancestors return during the night.*

*Tokyo Dontaku can be performed either in a circle moving counterclockwise or in lines. First, teach the hand movements and then add on the feet. This dance is done with a very gentle and graceful feeling and the knees stay slightly bent the whole time. The fingers of the hands are held together and the thumbs are tucked under the forefinger.*

### Part 1: Make a Mountain - 1 time (4 counts)

Hands: Clap hands 2 times  
Brush hands down and out to the side  
Bring hands back up  
Clap hands 1 time

Feet: Step forward right  
Step forward left  
Step forward right  
Rock back on left  
Bring right foot back to left foot

Say: "Clap, Clap, down up, Clap"  
(Count as 1, 2, 3 & 4)

Music: Traditional Song; Tokyo Dontaku  
Available from: The Kentucky Dance  
Foundation, Folk Dancer CD #21

### Part 2: Paddle & Shade - 1 time (4 counts)

Hands: Overlap hands and brush down and back on left side of body  
Repeat the same on the right side  
Bring left palm up in front of left eye, right palm pushes out  
and then switch hands 2 times

Feet: Step forward left  
Step forward right  
Step forward left, right, left

Say: "Paddle, Paddle, Shade your eyes"  
(Count as 1, 2, 3 & 4)

### Part 3: Trees & Sleeves - 1 time (8 counts)

Hands: Arms circle down, out and up, finishing with a circle overhead,  
upper body twists to right  
Arms circle down, out and up, finishing with a circle overhead,  
upper body twists to left  
Bend right arm at elbow with forearm lifted and  
fingers pointing towards the sky  
Brush left hand under right arm three times  
Repeat this pattern on the left side

Feet: Step on right foot, lift left foot up to right knee  
Step on left foot, lift right foot up to left knee  
Step right, left, right (turning slightly to the right side)  
Step left, right, left (turning slightly to the left side)

Say: "Make a tree, make a tree, brush your sleeve, brush your sleeve"  
(Count as 1 & 2, 3 & 4, 5 & 6, 7 & 8)



## Milestones in

# ballet



1.

People have danced since the beginning of civilization. Dance can be a form of celebration, it can be part of religious ritual, and it can be performed as entertainment. Ballet is a particular kind of dancing which requires a very special technique that has developed over 400 years of history.

Ballet began in the form of lavish entertainment spectacles during the Renaissance in the courts of Italy and France. In fact, the term “ballet” and the word “ball” are both derived from the Italian verb *ballare*, which means “to dance.” Early ballets were performed in ballrooms; they contained speaking and singing as well as dancing; and the performers were mostly the nobility—members of the courts. These court ballets reached their height of popularity under King Louis XIV, who was an accomplished dancer himself.

He formed the first official ballet school, L'Académie Royale de Musique et de Danse, know today as the Paris Opera. To this day, all ballet vocabulary is in French. From this time, ballet evolved away from court ballrooms into a more structured theater environment. The performers began to be trained professionals rather than amateurs dancing for their own enjoyment.

At first all of the dancers were men. The first women appeared professionally in 1681.



2.

In the early 1700s, one ballerina shortened her skirts so that her brilliant footwork was visible, and removed the heels from her shoes to make her movements easier. Another, concerned with dramatic expression, removed her heavy hoop skirts and fashionable wigs to make her characters more believable.

Women became the most popular dancers when they began to dance en pointe (on the tips of their toes, wearing special shoes). This period, the Romantic Era, was a time when most ballets were about supernatural creatures and the contrast between reality

and imagination. Advances in theater technology, such as gas lighting and more realistic sets, helped create an atmosphere of fantasy.

After 1850, the center of the ballet world shifted from Paris to St. Petersburg, Russia. There, a great ballet master and choreographer, Marius Petipa, produced the famous ballets *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and the *Nutcracker* in collaboration with composer Peter I. Tchaikovsky.

By 1900 the very best dancers were trained at the Imperial Russian Ballet School. In 1909 a group of these dancers, including Vaslav Nijinsky and Anna Pavlova, came to perform in Paris where they made a tremendous impression and revived interest in classical ballet.



3.

The Ballets Russes toured Europe and America presenting a varied repertoire and showcasing outstanding dancers for the next 20 years. Anna Pavlova formed her own company and traveled to every corner of the world, introducing ballet to people who had never seen it before.

Americans became enthusiastic about ballet in the 1930s when many of those dancers settled in America. One of these, George Balanchine, began a major ballet school and eventually directed New York City Ballet. Another was Adolph Bolm, who was the first director of San Francisco Ballet, the first professional ballet company in the United States, founded in 1933.



4.

Today, every major American city has a professional ballet company and good training schools. Thanks to the influence of superstars like Rudolf Nureyev and Mikhail Baryshnikov, male dancers are again as prominent as the ballerinas.

Contemporary ballets contain movements which are influenced by modern dance, and many performance pieces tell no story but are abstract or plotless. And so, the art of ballet continues to evolve.

1. Marie Taglioni

2. Marie Salle

3. Tamara Karsavina & Vaslav Nijinsky

4. SFB in Balanchine's *Four Temperaments*, © Erik Tomasson

## Ballet Timeline

1661 Louis XIV (Sun King) founds the Academic Royale de la Musique, later the Paris Opera Ballet.

1789 Jean Dauberval produces *La Fille Mal Gardee*, making it the oldest ballet still extant in modern-day repertoire.

1828 Marie Taglioni makes her debut at the Paris Opera dancing for the first time on pointe.

1890s Marius Petipa (1818-1910) choreographs the great classics of ballet, including *Sleeping Beauty* (1890), *Swan Lake* (1895, with Lev Ivanov), and *Raymonda* (1898).



2.

1909 Diaghilev's Ballets Russes holds its first Paris season at the Theatre du Chatelet.

1933 Adolph Bolm, former partner of Anna Pavlova, forms the San Francisco Opera Ballet. Willam Christensen joins the Company as ballet master in 1938 and produces the first U.S. versions of *Coppelia*, *Nutcracker*, and *Swan Lake*. Brothers Lew and Harold later join him to direct, respectively, the Company and its school.



4.

1940 Ballet Theatre (American Ballet Theatre) gives its first season.

1948 George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein found New York City Ballet.

1954 Robert Joffrey (1930-88) founds the Robert Joffrey Theater Ballet, now Joffrey Ballet of Chicago.

1. Louis XIV as Apollo
2. Marius Petipa
3. Carlotta Grisi as Giselle
4. Lew Christensen in Filling Station  
© Estate of George Platt Lynes
5. Rudolf Nureyev

1600

1653: Louis XIV dances the Sun God in *Le Ballet de la Nuit*. His teacher, Pierre Beauchamps, formalizes the terms we use as vocabulary in ballet today.



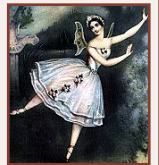
1.

1700

1726-7 Marie Camargo and her rival Marie Salle make debuts in London. Camargo shortens her skirt to show her feet, paving the way for the modern tutu.

1800

1841 *Giselle* is choreographed by Jean Coralli and Jules Perrot, starring Carlotta Grisi.



3.

1900

1912 Vaslav Nijinsky premieres his controversial *L'Après midi d'un Faune* for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in Paris.

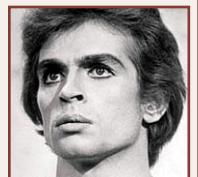
1915 Anna Pavlova premieres *California Poppy* in San Francisco.

1938 Eugene Loring choreographs and stars in *Billy the Kid* for Lincoln Kirstein's Ballet Caravan. It is the first work created by an American choreographer to represent an American theme.

1938-1962 Denham's Ballets Russes and Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo tour America and create a national audience for dance.

1950

1960s-1970s Defections of former Kirov Ballet stars such as Rudolf Nureyev (1938-95), who defects in 1961; Natalia Makarova, in 1971; and Mikhail Baryshnikov, in 1974 bring new excitement to classical ballet in Europe and America.



5.

2000

2008 San Francisco Ballet celebrates its 75th anniversary.

2008

# Essentials of ballet

*Just as sports, math, construction, and many other activities have their own vocabulary, so too does ballet. Because much of ballet's early development occurred in France, many of the words are French and have been handed down since the 16th century. Here are some common terms and their applications.*

**accent** To call attention to a particular movement or note in a phrase of dance or music

**adage** [ah-DAHZH] Slow sustained movements in ballet

**audience** Spectators at a performance

**audition** To try out for a role; a trial performance where a dancer is judged on their ability to dance

**balance** Maintaining the stability and equilibrium of the body

**ballet** [BA-lay] A classical dance form originating in European Courts during the 17th and 18th centuries that is characterized by grace and movement with intricate gestures and codified footwork

**ballerina** A female ballet dancer of highest ranking.

**ballet master/mistress** An individual (usually a retired dancer) with varying responsibilities including teaching, coaching, and rehearsing ballets.

**barre** The place where a dancer goes to begin his/her class work. The barre is a long pole securely attached to a wall, to give the dancer support. After the dancer has done barre work to warm up, he/she will move to the center of the classroom or studio to practice increasingly complex steps.

**beat** The underlying pulse which measures time; beat is part of rhythm

**choreographer** The visionary of the dancing in a ballet. He/she is responsible for creating the ballet for the stage and integrating the dancing, music, decor, story, costumes, and lighting.

**choreography** The art of creating and arranging steps to create a dance.

**composer** A person who creates music.

**concert** A public dance or music performance

**continuous** Movement that is uninterrupted in time

**conductor** The leader of the orchestra.

**corps de ballet** A group of dancers who work together as an ensemble. They form the background for the ballerina and her partner and are the backbone to any ballet company.

**costumes** The clothing performers wear to help set the mood a choreographer wishes to create, allowing for freedom of movement for dancers and actors alike

**dancer** Translates the choreographer's vision to the audience through technique and interpretation.

**demi** [duh-MEE] Half

**divertissements** Consist of a variety of short dances inserted in certain ballets as entertainment.

**dress rehearsal** Final practice before a performance

**dynamics** The force, energy and intensity with which motions are executed; ranging from soft, slow & fluid to hard, fast & sharp

**emotions** Feelings expressed in dance such as joy, sorrow, hate, love, etc.

**energy** A unit of force in movement

**ensemble** A group of dancers working together on a performance

**focus** To concentrate on one thing at a time

**freeze** A halt in movement at any given time

**grand** [grahn] Grand or big

**interpretation** Deciding the meaning or concept of a dance or movement

**isolate** To focus on one body part at a time

**jeté** [zhuh-TAY] To leap

**leap** To jump from one foot to the other

## Essentials of

# ballet

**level** A position or movement in space that occurs on the horizontal plane, such as high, medium or low

**lighting design** Is used to enhance scenery and costumes, as well as give a sense of time.

**narrative** A dance that tells a story

**parallel** A primary position in dance where the feet are flat on the ground with toes pointing forward

**pas de deux** A dance for two people, traditionally a ballerina and a premier danseur.

**pattern** An ordered arrangement which repeats itself

**pantomime** The art of telling a story, expressing a mood or an emotion or describing an action without words.

**performance** The presentation of a dance, play or theater piece for others

**phrase** A series of dance movements forming a unit in a choreographic pattern

**plié** [plee-AY] To bend the knees

**pointe shoes** Shoes worn only by female dancers that enable them to dance on the tips of their toes. The area covering the toes is made of layers of fabric glued together in the shape of a "box," covered in satin, and hardened. The sole of the shoe is made of hard leather to prevent the shoe from breaking when bent and to help support the foot. To keep the shoe on tightly, the dancers sew satin ribbons and elastic to the sides and tie the ribbons securely around their ankles. A pair of pointe shoes costs \$50 to \$80 wholesale and lasts from 1 hour to 8 hours of work.

**port de bras** [pawr deh brah] Movement of the arms

**premier danseur** A male ballet dancer of the highest ranking.

**principal dancer** A male or female dancer of the highest ranking.

**proscenium** The part of a modern stage

directly in front and framing the curtain.

**rehearsal** The practice of a dance before performing

**relevé** [rehl-VAY] To rise to the balls of the feet

**repertoire** [rep' er-twär] The collection of dances performed by a ballet company

**rhythm** The pattern of music or movement through time

**sauté** [soh-TAY] To jump

**set designer** A person who creates the scenic design.

**scenic design** Like costumes and makeup, scenic design helps to tell the story or set the mood of the ballet. The set must be designed so that the dancers can enter and exit the stage according to the choreographer's wishes.

**shape** A specific design of the body at rest or in motion

**solo** A dance performed by one person

**space** Area occupied by the dance or dancer

**stretch** To elongate or extend one's muscles

**studio** The place where artists study dance, practice and rehearse

**technique** The method and procedures of classical ballet training to get desired results. A dancer's ability to perform all steps and movements correctly.

**tempo** The speed at which a rhythm moves

**tendu** [tahn-DEW] To point or stretch the foot

**theater** A place for the presentation of performances—an essential in ballet

**turnout** The ability of the dancer to turn the legs outward from the hip joints to a 90-degree angle.

**tutu** Ballet skirt, usually made of net. Tutus may be of varying lengths. While the style and mood of the ballet help to determine the preferred tutu length, the dancer's technique is most clearly visible when she wears a short tutu. Tutus are very expensive; the cost of a jeweled tutu ranges from \$3,200 - \$4,200.

## Common Questions about

# ballet

### 1. What is a ballet?

It is dancing to music on stage in front of an audience using the classical ballet vocabulary.

### 2. How do ballet dancers make up the steps they do?

They don't make up the steps. Dancers learn the basic ballet steps in ballet class. Ballet steps are like words. Just as you combine words to form a sentence and then a paragraph, choreographers combine hundreds of steps to express a feeling or idea, or tell a story.

### 3. What do dancers do when they aren't on stage?

They practice exercises in daily ballet class to stay in shape and improve their skills, and they spend a lot of time learning and practicing dances taught by a choreographer. A ballet dancer's day is similar to a professional athlete's. Can you imagine what would happen if the 49ers or the Warriors did not have training camp or daily practices?

### 4. How long does it take to become a ballet dancer?

It takes about eight to ten years of training to become a professional ballet dancer. Training ideally begins when a student is between the ages of 8 and 10. Beginners go to ballet class once or twice a week; by the time a student is 15 years of age, he or she will be taking 10-15 lessons a week. While ballet classes can provide

exercise, discipline, and enjoyment for all, the hope of a professional career is limited to very few people. Those who will enter professional ballet companies have worked long and hard to develop their superior skills and are dedicated to their art.

### 5. Why does it take so long to become a ballet dancer?

Part of a ballet dancer's job is to make the difficult look easy. Ballet dancers must spin around many times without getting dizzy, lift their legs above their ears, and jump high in the air. It takes a lot of training to do things like that.

### 6. Can children dance on stage?

Children who take ballet classes are sometimes invited to dance with professional ballet companies. There are 74 children's roles in San Francisco Ballet's production of *Nutcracker*. All parts are double cast so there are at least 148 ballet students involved. Some ballet schools also give a performance each year at which all the children get a chance to perform and show what they have learned.

### 7. Is ballet just for girls?

No. Every year more and more boys are taking ballet lessons. Ballet is hard work and requires great coordination, strength, and athletic ability. Boys have to learn to jump high, turn very fast without getting dizzy, lift girls, and make it all look easy.



## Common Questions about

# ballet

### **8. When do girls learn to dance on their toes?**

Girls usually begin to wear pointe shoes when they are 11 or 12 years old. They have to wait until their bones are hard enough and their muscles in their feet and legs are strong enough to support their full weight en pointe.

### **9. Don't dancers get dizzy when they turn?**

No, they don't get dizzy because they are taught a trick called "spotting." Before they begin turning, they pick something to look at—a clock, a door, a light. Then they try and keep looking at it as they go around and around. Go ahead and try it.

### **10. Do dancers sometimes fall and hurt themselves?**

Just as athletes are vulnerable to certain injuries, so are dancers. Ballet is very demanding on a dancer's body; it has even been said that "ballet is a contact sport." Dancers hurt their backs and shoulders, necks and knees. They pull muscles, sprain ankles, twist joints, and break bones in their feet and legs. Ballet dancers take many steps to prevent injuries including taking class every day to keep their muscles strong, loose, and warm, performing warm up exercises before they dance, and putting a special powder on their shoes, called rosin, to prevent them from slipping. Even so, there is always the chance that a dancer will get hurt.

### **11. Do dancers get nervous before a performance?**

Even though professional dancers perform before thousands of people, every time they perform they still get a little nervous. But when they begin to dance, the nerves subside and they just perform the best they can.

### **12. When do dancers have to stop dancing?**

Dancing is a very hard life. Dancers work from almost the moment they get up in the morning until the time they go to bed at night. As a result, most dancers stop dancing when they are about 35-40 years old—about the time many professional athletes have to retire.

### **13. Do professional ballet dancers get paid a lot of money?**

A very few famous ballet dancers make a lot of money. Most professional ballet dancers, however, are not rich at all.

### **14. If dancers have to train so long, and work so hard, and make so little money, and are prone to injury, why do they do it?**

Ballet dancers dance because they love dancing and because it brings them great joy.

# about

## San Francisco Ballet



San Francisco Ballet Company Class  
© Erik Tomasson, 2007.

San Francisco Ballet, the oldest professional ballet company in America, has emerged as a world-class arts organization since it was founded as the San Francisco Opera Ballet in 1933. Initially, its primary purpose was to train dancers to appear in lavish, full-length opera productions.

Willam Christensen arrived in 1938, and choreographed the Company's first full-length production, *Coppélia*, the following year. In 1940, he staged the first American full-length production of *Swan Lake*. On Christmas Eve 1944, Christensen launched a national holiday tradition with the premiere of *Nutcracker*, the first complete version of the ballet ever staged in the United States.

In 1942, the Company became a totally separate entity from the opera and was renamed San Francisco Ballet. Willam Christensen was artistic director, and his brother Harold was appointed director of the San Francisco Ballet School, a position he retained for 33 years. Lew Christensen, America's first premier danseur, joined Willam as co-director in 1951, and took over the Company the following year. Under Lew's direction, the Company made its East Coast debut at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in 1956 and toured 11 Asian nations the following year, marking the first performances of an American ballet company in the Far East.

In 1972, after performing in various San Francisco theaters, the Company settled permanently in the War Memorial Opera House for its annual residency. The following year, Michael Smuin was appointed associate artistic director and celebrated his new partnership with Lew Christensen by collaborating on a full-length production of *Cinderella*. In 1976, Smuin's *Romeo and Juliet* became the first full-length ballet and

the first performance by a West Coast company to be shown on the PBS television series "Dance in America." In 1981, Smuin's *The Tempest*—the first ballet ever broadcast live from the War Memorial Opera House—was nominated for three Emmy Awards (Willam Kim received the award for Outstanding Costume Design). Three years later, Smuin received an Emmy Award for Choreography for the "Great Performances-Dance in America" national broadcast of *A Song for Dead Warriors*.

In 1974 San Francisco Ballet faced bankruptcy, but its supporters and the community responded with an extraordinary grassroots effort called "Save Our Ballet," which successfully brought the Company back from the brink. That same year, Dr. Richard E. LeBlond, Jr. was appointed president and general manager of the San Francisco Ballet Association. He developed the first long-range plan for an American dance company, and in 18 months San Francisco Ballet was in the black financially.

Helgi Tomasson's arrival as artistic director in July 1985 marked the beginning of a new era for San Francisco Ballet. Like Lew Christensen, Tomasson was, for many years, a leading dancer for the most important ballet choreographer of the 20th century, George Balanchine. Less than two years after Tomasson's arrival, San Francisco Ballet unveiled its fourth production of *Nutcracker* during the Company's 54th repertory season. Tomasson has since staged acclaimed full-length productions of many classics, including *Swan Lake* (1988); *The Sleeping Beauty* (1990); *Romeo & Juliet* (1994); *Giselle* (1999); *Don Quixote*, co-staged with former Principal Dancer and current Choreographer in Residence Yuri Possokhov (2003); and a new *Nutcracker* (2004).

In 1991, San Francisco Ballet performed in New York City for the first time in 26 years, returning in 1993, 1995, 1998, 2002, and 2006 for

# about

## San Francisco Ballet

the Company's first engagement at the Lincoln Center Festival. Following the first tour, *The New York Times* proclaimed, "Mr. Tomasson has accomplished the unprecedented: He has pulled a so-called regional company into the national ranks, and he has done so by honing the dancers into a classical style of astonishing verve and purity. San Francisco Ballet under Helgi Tomasson's leadership is one of the spectacular success stories of the arts in America."

In May 1995, San Francisco Ballet played host to 12 ballet companies from around the world for UNited We Dance: An International Festival, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter, which took place in the Performing Arts Center in San Francisco. Never before had a dance event brought together over 150 international artists for two weeks of creative exchange and inspiration.

San Francisco Ballet continues to enrich and expand its repertory and presents approximately 100 performances annually. The Company's vast repertory includes works by Sir Frederick Ashton, George Balanchine, August Bournonville, Christopher Bruce, Val Caniparoli, Lew Christensen, Nacho Duato, Flemming Flindt, William Forsythe, James Kudelka, Jirí Kylián, Lar Lubovitch, Agnes de Mille, Sir Kenneth MacMillan, Hans van Manen, Peter Martins, Mark Morris, Rudolf Nureyev, Marius Petipa, Roland Petit, Jerome Robbins, Paul Taylor, Antony Tudor, and Christopher Wheeldon.

In recent years, the Company's touring program has become increasingly ambitious. In particular, the Company has developed strong relationships with a number of domestic performing arts centers including the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.; New York's City Center; and Southern California's Orange County Performing Arts Center. San Francisco Ballet has also enjoyed more frequent overseas tours, including engagements at prestigious venues such as the famed Opéra de Paris-Palais Garnier in Paris (2001); London's Sadler's Wells Theatre (1999, 2004) and the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden (2002); Athens' Megaron Theatre (2002); the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los

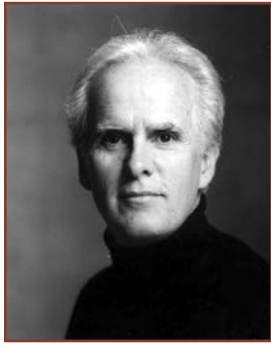
Angeles (2003); and the Edinburgh International Festival at the Edinburgh Playhouse (2003).

Notably, on the second day of the Company's London engagement in 2004, Sadler's Wells' box office experienced the second-highest single sales day in its history. Of the engagement, David Dougill of *The Sunday Times* wrote, "Helgi Tomasson's outstanding artistic direction (now in its 20th year)...has transformed a regional American troupe into one of the world's top ballet companies."

In 2005, the Company returned to Paris, participating in a three-week inaugural engagement at Les étés de la danse de Paris, a new outdoor dance festival held in the Marais district of Paris. As part of the engagement's three-program repertory, San Francisco Ballet presented commissioned works by internationally acclaimed choreographers Lar Lubovitch, Paul Taylor, and Christopher Wheeldon.

In 2004, San Francisco Ballet was the first American ballet company to present the evening-length *Sylvia*, with all-new choreography by Mark Morris. The Company also performed a two-week Centennial Celebration to honor the 100th anniversary of the birth of Master Choreographer George Balanchine. In December 2004, San Francisco Ballet debuted Tomasson's critically acclaimed new production of *Nutcracker*, hailed by *The New York Times* as "...striking, elegant and beautiful." In 2005, Tomasson was awarded the prestigious Lew Christensen Medal in honor of his 20th anniversary as artistic director of San Francisco Ballet, and that same year, the Company won its first Laurence Olivier Award, for its 2004 fall season at Sadler's Wells Theatre. In 2006, in a readers' poll conducted by Dance Europe magazine, San Francisco Ballet was the first non-European company to be voted "Company of the Year" by the publication. In 2008, San Francisco Ballet celebrates its 75th anniversary.

The San Francisco Ballet School, overseen by Tomasson, attracts students from around the world, training approximately 350 annually. In addition to filling the ranks of San Francisco Ballet, graduates have gone on to join distinguished ballet companies throughout the world.



© David Martinez

## Helgi Tomasson

Artistic Director  
and Choreographer

# biography

Helgi Tomasson has held the position of artistic director for San Francisco Ballet since July 1985. Since then, the Company has evolved from a respected regional troupe to an international company praised for its broad repertory, dancers of uncommon range and skill, and a vision that continually sets the standard for the international dance world.

San Francisco Ballet is dancing better than it has at any point in its history. As a choreographer, teacher and coach, Tomasson has fostered an uncompromising classicism that has become the bedrock of the Company's training. The dancers are energized and inspired by this rigorous training and continue to rise to new heights with each passing year.

Born in Reykjavik, Iceland, Tomasson began his early ballet training there with an Icelandic teacher and then joined the National Theatre's affiliated school, which was led by Erik and Lisa Bidsted. At fifteen, the emerging dancer began his professional career with the celebrated Pantomime Theatre in Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens. Two years later, Jerome Robbins met Tomasson and was so impressed by his dancing that he arranged a scholarship for him to study at the School of American Ballet in New York City. Soon after, Tomasson began his professional career with The Joffrey Ballet and two years later joined The Harkness Ballet. Over the next six years, he became one of the company's most

celebrated principal dancers.

In 1969, Tomasson entered the First International Ballet Competition in Moscow as a United States representative and returned with the Silver Medal (the Gold Medal was awarded to Mikhail Baryshnikov). The following year, Tomasson joined New York City Ballet as a principal dancer and over the course of his career became one of the finest classical dancers of his era. He was one of the foremost interpreters of George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins, and both men created several roles expressly for him. In 1980, Tomasson choreographed his first ballet for the School of American Ballet Workshop, which elicited encouragement from Balanchine to continue choreographing.

Tomasson accepted the invitation from San Francisco Ballet to become artistic director of America's first professional ballet company in 1985, drawing to a close a glorious performing career. Since assuming this role with the Company, Tomasson has choreographed over 30 ballets, including stunning full-length productions of *Don Quixote* (co-staged by Yuri Possokhov), *Giselle*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *Swan Lake*. His intricate and varied works, such as *7 for Eight*, *Chi-Lin*, *Concerto Grosso*, *The Fifth Season*, *Handel-a Celebration*, *Meisters Mozart*, *Nanna's Lied*, and *Sonata*, showcase the unique qualities of individual dancers. Tomasson's *Prism*, which debuted in

## Helgi Tomasson

# biography

2000 at New York City Ballet, received rave reviews and was deemed a “triumph” by The New York Times. In 2004, his new production of *Nutcracker*, created in collaboration with an internationally recognized design team, debuted to enthusiastic critic and audience response. *The New York Times* proclaimed, “This is a *Nutcracker* on a grand scale... striking, elegant and beautiful.”

The strong classical base instilled by Tomasson enables the dancers to effortlessly navigate a myriad of styles by a range of internationally distinguished choreographers. Those invited by Tomasson to create works on the Company have included David Bintley, Val Caniparoli, William Forsythe, James Kudelka, Lar Lubovitch, Mark Morris, Paul Taylor, Stanton Welch, and Christopher Wheeldon. Tomasson has also continued to expand San Francisco Ballet’s repertory by acquiring works by renowned choreographers such as Sir Frederick Ashton, George Balanchine, August Bournonville, Flemming Flindt, Agnes de Mille, Roland Petit, Hans van Manen, Nacho Duato, Jerome Robbins, and Antony Tudor, among others. Tomasson’s own works have been performed by New York City Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet, Houston Ballet, Alberta Ballet, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, Ballet Estable del Teatro Colón, and Asami Maki Ballet. In Denmark, Tomasson’s 1993 staging of *The Sleeping Beauty* was the most lavish production ever produced in the Royal Danish Ballet’s history and was later filmed for Danish public television in April 1995.

Under Tomasson’s direction, San Francisco Ballet has toured the world, receiving praise for its purity and verve. Engagements in New York City (1991, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2002, 2006), London (1999, 2001, 2004), Copenhagen (1998), and Paris (1988, 1994, 2001, 2005) are among the highlights of the Company’s history. For the Company’s 2004 London engagement, San Francisco Ballet won the prestigious Laurence Olivier Award, its first, in the category of “Outstanding Achievement in Dance.” Of the tour, Judith

Mackrell of *The Guardian* noted, “As director of San Francisco Ballet, Helgi Tomasson has started to acquire an aura of infallibility, his expertise in laying down repertory, and in balancing great evenings of dance, is held in envy by the rest of the profession.”

Tomasson’s vision, commitment, and dedication to the art of classical dance were demonstrated when he conceived UNited We Dance: An International Festival, produced in San Francisco in May 1995. Created to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter, it included 12 international companies of the highest caliber that Tomasson had invited to present new works created by native choreographers. Never before had a dance event brought together over 150 artists for an unprecedented two weeks of creative exchange and inspiration.

Tomasson’s achievements have garnered him numerous awards and honors, and he has participated as a judge for ballet competitions in Italy, Moscow, Paris, Helsinki, and Japan. During the 1970s in his homeland of Iceland, he was named a Knight of the Order of the Falcon for his achievements as a dancer. In June 1990, Tomasson was named Commander of the Order of the Falcon by the president of Iceland for his continuous achievements in the arts. In 1989, he received Dance Bay Area’s Isadora Duncan Award for his outstanding choreography in *Swan Lake*. In 1991, he was awarded the Commonwealth Club of California’s Distinguished Citizen Award. In recognition of his artistic excellence, Tomasson received the Golden Plate Award from the American Academy of Achievement in 1992. That same year, he received the Dance Magazine Award in recognition of his contributions to the dance world. In 1995, Tomasson joined the Artistic Advisory Board of The Ballet Theatre in Prague, directed by Jana Kurová. Also in 1995, Tomasson was honored with the Cultural Award of The American-Scandinavian Foundation. In 1996, he was presented with a Doctor of Humane



# Helgi Tomasson *biography*

Letters, honoris causa, from Dominican College of San Rafael, in recognition of his value as a role model, his extraordinary career, and his community-service accomplishments. That same year, he was awarded the Isadora Duncan Special Award for UNited We Dance: An International Festival.

Currently, Tomasson serves on the Board of Directors of the School of American Ballet and the Artistic Committee for the New York Choreographic Institute, and has served as a member of the National Endowment for the Arts Dance Advisory Panel. In May 2001, Tomasson was granted the rank of Officier in the French Order of Arts and Letters, established in 1957 to recognize those who have contributed significantly to furthering the arts in France and throughout the world. Hugues Gall, then director of the Opéra National de Paris, presented the award in a ceremony attended by Ólafur Ragnar Grimsson, president of Iceland, following San Francisco Ballet's triumphant opening at the Palais Garnier. In spring 2002, the Board of Trustees of New York's Juilliard School unanimously voted to bestow an honorary doctoral degree upon Tomasson, as one of five doctorates given annually in different artistic disciplines. Other recipients include

playwright Edward Albee and actor and comedian Bill Cosby. Most recently, during a tour to Iceland's Reykjavik Arts Festival in May 2007, Grimsson awarded Tomasson the Grand Cross of the Order of the Falcon, the country's most prestigious honor.

In addition to his role as artistic director of the Company, Tomasson is the director of San Francisco Ballet School. For Tomasson, the School is central to the life and development of the Company. Just as he expects the finest dancing and most meticulous attention to detail from his dancers, he demands the highest standards for training the students in the School.

Tomasson lives in San Francisco with his wife, Marlene, who was dancing with The Joffrey Ballet when they met. They have two sons, Erik and Kris.

about



## The Center for Dance Education

As a vital cultural contributor to our community, San Francisco Ballet has created The Center for Dance Education (CDE) with programs that reach wide audiences from diverse populations throughout the Bay Area; approximately 35,000 people benefit from these programs each year. Though the Center for Dance Education is fairly new, there are long-established free programs administered by San Francisco Ballet.

The highly popular pre-performance discussion program, known as Meet the Artist Interviews, spotlight the specific San Francisco Ballet repertory program to be performed that evening/afternoon. These informative talks feature Company dancers, guest artists, choreographers, and conductors in conversation with a moderator. Meet the Artist Interviews last 30 minutes and take place in the War Memorial Opera House one hour before performance time on select evenings and Sunday matinees as well as opening nights of all repertory programs and are free to all ticket holders.

Dance scholar and educator Mary Wood, along with other guests, hosts the Pointes of View lecture series, which are salon-style interviews with San Francisco Ballet dancers, guest artists, choreographers, musicians, and designers. These hour-long informative discussions give attendees an in-depth look into the specific San Francisco Ballet repertory program to be performed that evening. These programs are free and open to the public and due to popular demand have

relocated to the Green Room of the Veterans Building of the War Memorial Opera House.

The San Francisco Ballet Center for Dance Education is also proud to offer new and expanding programs that serve children, youth, and families throughout the Bay Area, providing important avenues of access, education, and opportunities in dance.

San Francisco Ballet offers two **Community Matinee** performances of selections from the current Spring Season. These matinees feature special educational behind-the-scenes lecture demonstrations. All Community Matinee performances are at the War Memorial Opera House. Discount tickets are offered to students and seniors, serving approximately 6,000 school-aged children, teachers, and seniors annually.

**Family Connections** is a program that brings dance workshops and lectures to venues such as the San Francisco Public Library Main Branch and the Asian Art Museum. This program gives children and their parents a shared experience of dance and, when available, free tickets to see the SF Ballet company in performance at the War Memorial Opera House are provided to participants.

The **Dance In Schools and Communities** (DISC) program is SF Ballet's most longstanding outreach program. This celebrated program reaches nearly 3,000 elementary school children each year, with 10-week dance residencies in 30 elementary schools in the San Francisco Unified School

# about

## The Center for Dance Education

District. DISC is a multi-cultural dance and music program celebrating the historical, traditional, and folkloric dance traditions of diverse cultures. DISC provides all participants complimentary tickets to SF Ballet Community Matinees. Annually, DISC awards approximately 50 students with full one-year scholarships to the prestigious San Francisco Ballet School.

Select DISC students are also given the opportunity to participate in the annual Performance Project. During this multi-week program, children experience the process of creating and performing a dance/musical presentation. Performances take place at various venues throughout San Francisco.

**Ballet 101** is a class for adults who are curious about the art of ballet and the world of dance. This adult education course is designed to give participants a hands-on, interactive learning experience. The program harnesses the talent and experience of SF Ballet employees and faculty who staff this program. The course consists of a series of lectures and experiential activities that build on the prior learning.

A new program of the CDE, the **Community Circle Dance Camp** is a week-long summer day camp that provides instruction in dance, music, and art for children from all over San Francisco. Targeted toward inner-city youth, the camp is based in the Tenderloin neighborhood and is offered free of charge for children of low-income families. A wide variety of classes are offered to students, ranging from hip hop, and salsa, to circus arts and visual arts, providing them a well rounded experience in arts education.

**Online Educational Resources** are designed to educate and excite users about SF Ballet

and dance in general. Downloadable Study Guides enhance the theater-going experience for students attending Community Matinees, by providing information specific to the ballets being performed. Study Guides include articles, stories, music clips, and links to online resources. Visit [www.sfballet.org](http://www.sfballet.org) to access these resources.

The **Visiting Scholar Program** brings nationally known scholars to San Francisco Ballet to lecture on a variety of topics that are meant to educate and inspire balletomanes of all levels and ages.

*Visiting Scholars:*

- 2007/08 Professor Jennifer Fisher
- 2006/07 Professor Lynn Garafola
- 2005/06 Professor Deborah Jowitt

**Meet the Artist Interviews** spotlight the specific San Francisco Ballet repertory program to be performed prior to performances at the War Memorial Opera House. These highly informative talks feature Company dancers, guest artists, choreographers and conductors in conversation with a moderator.

**Pointes of View Lectures** are free and open to the general public. Dance Scholar and Educator Mary Wood, lecture on a variety of dance related topics, incorporating salon-style interviews with San Francisco Ballet dancers, guest artists, choreographers, musicians, and designers.

## Further Resources

*Ballet and Modern Dance: A Concise History*, 2nd ed. Jack Anderson. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Book.

*Ballet 101 : A Complete Guide to Learning and Loving the Ballet*. Robert Greskovic. New York: Hyperion.

*International Dictionary of Ballet*, 2 vols. Martha Bresmer, ed. Detroit/London/Washington, D.C.; St. James Press.

*The Language of Ballet: A Dictionary*. Thalia Mara. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Book.

*101 Stories of the Great Ballets*. George Balanchine and Francis Mason. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

## San Francisco Ballet Books & Recordings

*San Francisco Ballet at 75*. Janice Ross. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

Broadcast (TV)/Video/DVD – Lar Lubovitch's *Othello*, music by Eliot Goldenthal; Emil de Cou, conductor. Co-produced by KQED (San Francisco) and WNET (New York) for the PBS series *Dance in America* series, aired on June 18, 2003.

CD – *Debussy Rediscovered*, Emil de Cou, conductor, Arabesque Recordings, Z6734, 1999.

CD – *Handel-Schoenberg-Spohr-Elgar: works for String Quartet and Orchestra, with the Lark String Quartet*; Jean-Louis LeRoux, conductor. Arabesque Recordings, Z6723, 1998.

CD – Suite from the ballet *Othello*, music by Elliot Goldenthal; Emil de Cou, conductor; Varese Sarabande recording, VSD-5942, 1998.

CD – *Nutcracker*, music by Tchaikovsky; Denis de Coteau, conductor; self-produced recording by O'Brien Enterprises, OB-101, 1988.

CD – Smuin's *The Tempest*, music by Paul Chihara; Jean-Louis LeRoux, conductor. Recording by the Moss Group. 2-record set; 2-MMG-201X, 1982. Recorded April 7, 1981.

### Answers to Activity (p. 15)

- |      |      |
|------|------|
| 1. b | 6. c |
| 2. d | 7. b |
| 3. c | 8. d |
| 4. d | 9. d |
| 5. a |      |

# DANCE-IT:

## Dance and Information Technology

### Dance-IT on Tour: Southern California

Thursday, November 6 –

Sunday, November 9, 2008

Calit2 Atrium:  
University of California, Irvine  
Irvine, California 92617

Building 35 on UCI map:  
[http://today.uci.edu/pdf/UCI\\_08\\_map\\_campus.pdf](http://today.uci.edu/pdf/UCI_08_map_campus.pdf)



This guide was prepared by the  
San Francisco Ballet Center for Dance Education.  
Available online at [www.sfballet.org](http://www.sfballet.org)

### Dance-IT on Tour: Southern California

Tuesday, November 11 –

Sunday, November 16, 2008

Segerstrom Hall Lobby  
Orange County Performing Arts Center  
600 Town Center Drive  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

