

CHAPTER

11

Jazz Dance

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Enduring understanding:

Jazz dance is an American classic and contemporary dance genre used in entertainment, media, and concert dance.

Essential question:

How does jazz dance help me express myself as a dancer?

Learning Objectives

- **Recognize major jazz dance works, styles, and jazz dance artists in history.**
- **Execute basic jazz dance technique, use jazz dance vocabulary, and perform combinations.**
- **Apply jazz class etiquette and dance safety while dancing.**
- **Evaluate and respond to classical and contemporary jazz performances.**

Introduction

An American dance genre, jazz grew out of the popular dances of the early 20th century.

Throughout its development, jazz dance has absorbed many dance forms from society and the stage or was influenced by music and trends of an era.

Jazz dance is a versatile and adaptable dance genre with social, concert dance, musical theater, and entertainment styles.

Chapter 11 Vocabulary Terms

Parallel Position

Leap

Isolation

Hop

Ball Change

Jump

Three Step Turn

Fan Kick

Grapevine

Dig

Pivot Turn

Spotting

Jazz Dance

- **Body positions use proper alignment, with the addition of contractions and tilts.**
- **Jazz dance includes percussive movement and fluid movement in a juxtaposition to keep interest.**

African Dance Characteristics in Jazz Dance

- **Grounded stance**
- **Percussive rhythm**
- **Isolated body parts**
- **Movement initiated from the torso**

20th-Century Roots of Jazz Dance

- **Social dance forms**
- **Ragtime**
- **Swing music**

Jazz dance before 1960 was based on social dances of the era.

Jazz Dance After 1960

- **Merged dance genres and techniques into a new dance form and styles**
- **Based on Broadway musical dance steps**
- **Social dances of the era**
- **Improvisation and personal style**
- **Borrowed ballet and modern dance techniques**

Jazz Dance Artists

- **Jack Cole blended Indian, Afro-Cuban, and Spanish dances into his work.**
- **Katherine Dunham used Afro-Haitian dance and complex rhythms.**

(continued)

Jazz Dance Artists *(continued)*

- **Jerome Robbins was choreographer and director of *West Side Story*.**
- **Lester Horton's work influenced West Coast jazz dance. He used cultural dance forms and developed strong, versatile dancers.**
- **Alvin Ailey used Horton technique, African overtones, and social components in his jazz choreography.**

Later Jazz Dance Artists

- **Gus Giordano** opened a studio in Chicago and founded a jazz dance company and the World Jazz Dance Congress.
- **Bob Fosse** was a dancer, choreographer, and director of musical theater and film. His style used turned-in knees, quirky moves, and props. He is considered one of the most influential choreographers of the 20th century.
- **Michael Peters** danced with Ailey and other modern dancers. He choreographed and directed onstage, for television, and for music videos. He choreographed Michael Jackson's videos for "Beat It" and "Thriller."
- **Michael Bennett** was a dancer, choreographer, and musical director who created *A Chorus Line*.

Parts of the Jazz Dance Class

- **Warm-up: total-body movements and isolations**
- **Isolations: head, shoulders, ribs, hips, legs, and feet**
- **Standing exercises**
- **Moving across the floor: walks, jumps, leaps, kicks, and turns**
- **Combination**
- **Cool-down**

Jazz Dance Class Safety

Safety in jazz dance class begins with appropriate dancewear and footwear selections and removal of jewelry and secure hair.

Jazz dance steps and combinations make awareness of space essential.

Jazz Dance Positions of the Feet

- **Parallel and turned-out positions**
- **First, second, third, fourth, and fifth**
 - **Full-foot positions**
 - **Relevé**
 - **Forced arch**

Forced Arch



Jazz Dance Positions of the Arms and Hands

- **Positions of the arms**
 - First, second, third, fourth, and fifth positions
- **Jazz hands**
 - Fists or soft fists
 - Relaxed
 - Stretched

Isolations

An isolation is an exercise in which you move individual parts of the body while the rest of the body stays still or moves in a different way.

- **Head**
- **Shoulders**
- **Ribs**
- **Hips**

Summary

Jazz is an ever changing creative expression that echoes the life and times of the people in each decade. It has complex roots, and it is intertwined with many other dance genres.