

AUDITORIUM THEATRE
of ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY

GENERAL BALLET
STUDY GUIDE



BALLET

Ballet is a specific dance form and technique. Works of dance choreographed using this technique are called ballets and may include dance, mime, acting and music. Ballet is best known for its virtuoso techniques such as pointe work and grand pas de deux.

BALLET GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ballet terminology is the same the world over. French is the primary language of ballet because the first academy of ballet was based in Paris, France over 300 years ago. Ever since then, ballet dancers and teachers have been using the same words.

adagio (a-DAHZH-ee-o): A slow dance movement.

allégro (al-LAY-groh): Quick and lively dance movement.

arabesque (ah-ra-BESK): The position in ballet where the dancer stands on one leg with the other leg stretched out to the back, usually at a right angle to the body. The arms usually correspond to the position. There are many types of arabesques depending on the direction of the body, height of the leg, and position of the arms.

artistic director: The person at a ballet company who is in charge of choosing ballets to perform, hiring dancers, rehearsing the company for performances and other artistic decisions.

ballerina (bahl-lay-REE-nah): The female dancer in a ballet company who is usually an exceptional performer and performs many leading roles. The best ballerina is called the “Prima Ballerina”.

barre (bar): A wooden or sometimes metal hand-rail placed around the walls of the ballet studio. The dancers begin their daily classes using the barre for support.

choreographer (core-ee-og-rah-fer): The person who arranges movements and patterns of dancers in order to form entire dances. They may also develop the concept or idea of a ballet.



BALLET GLOSSARY OF TERMS (CONTINUED)

corps de ballet (cor duh bal-Lay): The group of dancers other than principals and soloists, who make up a ballet company. They work much like a chorus would for an opera.

divertissement (dee-vehr-tees-MAHN): a short entertaining dance.

jeté (zhuh-TAY): A jump in the air. There are many different types, but the most common is the *grande jete* or big jete. In this movement both of the dancer's legs are split in mid air.

pas (pah): In French means "step".

pas de deux (pah de duh): A dance for two people, usually a man and a woman. *Deux* in French means two.

pirouette (peer-o-WET): A turn or spin on one foot. Doing multiple pirouettes takes very good balance and coordination.

plié (plee-AY): A bending of the legs where the knees point directly to the side. Most ballet steps such as jumps and turns begin and end with a plie. Plies may be done in any of the five positions of the feet.

pointe (pwent): The tip of the toe. Most female ballet dancers dance on the tips of their toes wearing special shoes, called pointe shoes.

port de bras (pawr duh brah): The five basic positions of the arms corresponding to each of the five positions of the feet.

premier danseur (pruh-MYAY dahn-SUHR): A male ballet star or leading dancer of the ballet company. He is the male version of the Prima Ballerina.



tour en l'air (toor-ahn-lehr): A turn in the air. A step in which the dancer jumps straight up in the air and performs one or more turns of the body.

tutu (too-too): A ballet costume made of a bodice and layers of netting. In most classical ballets the ballerina wears a classical tutu which sticks straight out from the waist. In Romantic ballets, such as *Giselle*, the tutu is long, hanging below the calf.

THE HISTORY OF BALLET

15th century:

Ballet originates as the court entertainment of Renaissance Italy, where the ruling aristocracy patronizes the arts and compete with each other by holding elaborate, costly parties featuring dance performances by their subjects.

16th century:

Catherine de Medicis, queen of France, commissions the first ballet: *Le Ballet comique de la Reine*. At more than five hours long, the performance combines dance, an original orchestral work, sets, special effects, singing and spoken verse in its retelling of the ancient Greek myth of Circe.

17th century:

Louis XIV revives French interest in ballet and establishes the first ballet school, l'Académie Royale de Danse. Around 1670, Pierre Beauchamps develops and codifies the five classic ballet positions at the Académie.

18th century:

Professionally trained French ballet dancers begin performing publicly around 1708 and similar dance troupes develop across the continent and eastward, including the acclaimed Russian Imperial Ballet of St. Petersburg, founded in 1738.

Marie Camargo shortens her skirt above her ankles, pulls on tights and removes the heels from her dancing shoes, effectively creating the ballet slipper.

Another set of rivals, choreographers Jean-Georges Noverre of France and Gasparo Angiolini of Italy, separately develop the dramatic style known as *ballet d'action*. Where early ballets were court entertainments that encompassed dance, theatre and singing, *ballet d'action* tells a story through dance steps and movements.



19th century:

Between 1820 and 1830, Italian dancer, teacher and choreographer Carlo Blasis writes extensively about ballet history and theory, and codifies the techniques of ballet.

The Romantic period influences ballet technique and fashion by inspiring *pointe* shoes, which lift female dancers and portray them as heavenly beings, and *tutus*, which completely free the legs. Female dancers gain importance over their male partners and the concept of the prima ballerina is born.

20th century:

During and after the 1917 Russian Revolution, some of the country's finest dancers emigrate to the West, join or develop troupes and open ballet academies. Their contributions to North America and Europe elevate ballet skill in countries like the U.S. and the U.K. to levels comparable to the acclaimed Russian troupes. These Russian dancers also dramatically increase worldwide audiences for ballet.

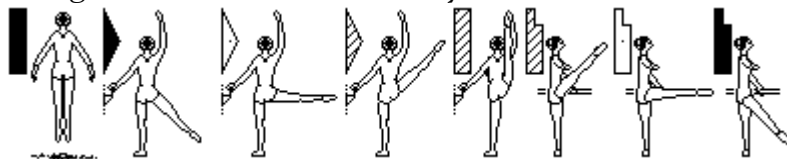
In the 1920s, Rudolf von Laban begins developing Labanotation, a system of dance notation used to record or make a blueprint of dance choreography. It eventually becomes a method of recording all body movement and is also used to analyze movement in sports and other areas.

The length of a symbol tells you the timing of the movement. Where the symbol is placed on the staff tells you what part of the body is doing the movement. The shape of the symbol tells you the direction of the movement.

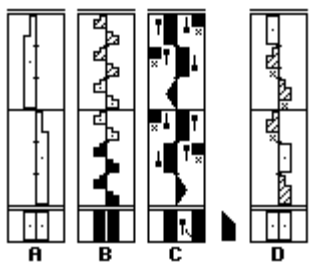
Labanotation:

Labanotation is read from the bottom up.

Arm gestures and the direction symbols



Steps are transferences of weight from one part of the body to another part of the body.



A = Very slow steps (one half step per bar)

B = Very fast steps (one step per quarter note) first in low level - with bend knees (in Plié). Next in middle level - normal steps. In the end in high level - steps on half point.

C = Balancé: The right leg steps to the right side into the Plié. Step on the left leg into the Plié in place in front of the right leg (indicated by the pin) - simultaneously the right leg sur le cou-de-pied back. Step on the right leg in place into Plié back -

simultaneously the left leg sur le cou-de-pied front. In the next bar everything to the other side.

D = Minuet step: Arms diagonal front low. Step onto the right foot half point. Lower to full foot. Three small (half-)steps left, right, left - on half point. In the end lower to full foot.

FIVE BASIC BALLET POSITIONS

There are five basic foot positions from which all the other dance steps are derived.



First Position or Première (prehm-YAHR):

In this position, the heels and knees are together, with the legs turned out from the hips toes pointed out so that the feet make a V-shape. Ideally, the feet form a straight line, or a 180-degree angle. The arms are out and in front of the torso, forming a soft curve. The spine is straight, and the head, back, and pelvis are aligned.



Second Position or Second (se-GOHND):

In this position, the legs are again turned out from the hips, but the feet are separated about shoulder length apart, still in a V-shape. Eventually, with practice, the feet may form a straight line. The arms are out to the sides and slightly rounded.



Third Position or Troisième (trwah-ZYEM):

Keeping the legs turned out from the hips, the dancer crosses the front heel about halfway in front of the other foot, touching it at the middle. Either foot can be used. If the right foot is in front, the right arm is raised overhead in a semicircle. The left arm is extended out to the side. If the left foot is in front, then the left arm is overhead and the right arm is extended.

FIVE BASIC BALLET POSITIONS (CONTINUED)



Fourth Position or Quatrième (kah-tree-EHM):

With the legs still turned out from the hips, one foot is placed directly in front of the other, with the forward heel directly in front of the toe of the other foot. There is a space of about twelve inches between the feet. If the right foot is in front, the right arm is raised overhead in a semicircle.



Fifth Position or Cinquième (san-KYEM):

With the legs turned out from the hips, the heel of the front foot is placed against the first joint of the other big toe. The arms are lifted and extended overhead into a soft circular shape



THE POINTE SHOE

Proper footwear is the most important piece of attire for ballet dancers. There are many different kinds of dance shoes, including ballet slippers, character shoes/boots and jazz shoes. Perhaps the most well known shoe is the pointe shoe (the shoes for dancing on the toes) of the female dancer. Making pointe shoes is a difficult and precise art. For each size of pointe shoe, there is a basic form called the *last*, upon which the shoe is molded. Sizes generally range from 1 1/2 to 5 1/2.

To build the shoe, the shoemaker uses several layers of fabric, starting with a cotton lining and a flannel-type fabric to form the slipper. In the toe section, seven fabrics of varying thickness are bonded together into a block form with special glue. Finally, the shoe is covered with satin, glued together, dried and stitched for strength.

Each individual dancer has specific requirements for her shoes. For example, the width of the block required may vary from dancer to dancer. The vamp (length of the shoe covering the toe), the width and height of the heel and the stiffness of the leather sole may also be tailored to fit an individual dancer's needs. The shoemaker will put his mark on each completed shoe, along with the size and brand name. Dancers come to rely on a specific maker and are usually hesitant to have anyone else make their shoes.

Dancers sew their own ribbons on the shoes, and in some cases, sew on elastics to help hold the shoe securely to the foot. Dancers keep their shoes clean using a special cleaning fluid. All of this care is taken for shoes that will probably last for only a few performances, and often, if a particular role calls for a great deal of pointe work, for only one performance. A dancer, rehearsing a role calling for a lot of pointe work could go through four to six pairs a week.



A BALLET DANCER'S CAREER

The career of a dancer is relatively short and it is not unusual to spend more years training than dancing professionally. The movements demanded of the human body in ballet are of a very specific nature, requiring great precision and care. As a result, the physique must be prepared for this future at a young age. The professional training period usually consists of at least eight to nine years of intensive, precise work. Ideally, girls and boys should begin their professional training at the age of nine. Training is a very progressive process. The young professional student begins with daily classes, practicing the basic ballet positions and movements, learning body placement, correct carriage, balance and artistry. As the student progresses, time spent in classes each week increases, as does the difficulty and extensiveness of the skills taught. As well as the daily class in classical technique, students are required to receive instruction in variation (solo) work, pointe (dancing on the toes), pas de deux (a dance for two), character, jazz and modern dance. Prior to the introduction of pointe work, a number of criteria must be considered. These include the amount of previous training, a student's strength and ability, as well as age as it relates to the bone development in the dancer's feet. Pas de deux and repertoire (the collection of different ballets that a dance company performs) are introduced only when the student has adequate strength, ability and training. Students who graduate to a professional ballet company usually begin dancing as a member of the corps de ballet (ensemble). After a few years, corps de ballet members who demonstrate growth in artistry, technical ability, musicality and ability to communicate with the audience, may be promoted to the rank of Soloist or Second Soloist. Finally, the highest achievement in the company, the position of Principal Dancer or Ballerina, is attainable by only a few gifted dancers.



BALLET WORD FIND

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

WORD LIST

ADAGIO	ATTITUDE	CABRIOLLE	EFFACE	POINTES
ALLEGRO	BALANCE	CROISE	EN DEDANS	SISSONE
ARABESQUE	BARRE	DEVELOPPE	ENTRECHAT	TEMPS LEVE
ASSEMBLE	BATTEMENTS	ECARTE	PLIE	TENDU

AUDITORIUM THEATRE

of ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY

AUDITORIUM THEATRE HISTORY

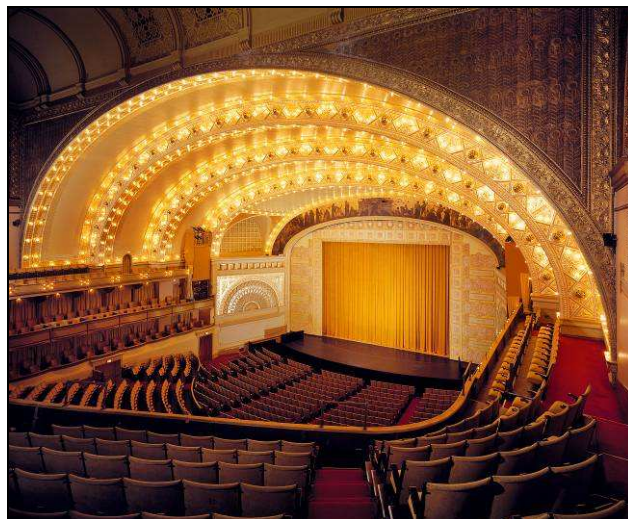
The Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University is an Illinois not-for-profit corporation committed to presenting the finest in international cultural, local and community programming to Chicago and to the continued restoration and preservation of this historic national landmark Theatre.

The Auditorium Theatre is the crowning achievement of famed architects Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler. It was built in 1889 and was immediately acclaimed as one of the most beautiful and functional theatres in the world. Its architectural integrity and perfect acoustics are internationally recognized.

Closed at the onset of World War II, the Theatre was neglected and abandoned for many years, slipping into oblivion and decay. Through the valiant efforts of Mrs. Beatrice T. Spachner and a group of dedicated civic leaders, funds were raised to restore the Theatre to much of its original splendor.

The Auditorium Theatre is proud to be the resident home of The Joffrey Ballet. Other recent presentations at the Auditorium include The Bolshoi Ballet, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, The Eifman Ballet, Wilco, REM, Bob Dylan, *The Producers* and *Movin' Out*. The Auditorium Theatre is also extremely proud to have opened the national tours of *Les Misérables*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Miss Saigon* and the epic musical *Show Boat*.

Recently, the Auditorium has expanded its programming to host a variety of events, from dance to music, from Broadway to pop concerts. The Auditorium board is spearheading ongoing restoration efforts to reveal and preserve the splendor of the Theatre. Keeping true to Sullivan and Adler's vision, the Auditorium Theatre truly does offer entertainment for all of Chicago.



AUDITORIUM THEATRE

of ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY

We are grateful to you and to many other teachers who support theatre and arts education by bringing students to the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University. Students are some of our most important and enthusiastic audience members. We need your help and the help of your chaperones to ensure that your students have the best experience possible. Please take a few minutes to talk with your group about the important role they will play as audience members.

Audience Behavior Guidelines:

Seeing a live show is different than watching a movie or television. The performers in a live show can hear what you are saying and doing in the audience! They can even feel the energy in the room and tell if you are ready to engage in the live show by actively watching and listening. Please actively engage in the production and be a courteous audience member.

- It's ok to **laugh, clap and respond to performers** during the show! These are all good ways to let the performers know that you appreciate their talents and work. Performers will often perform better for audiences who feel engaged in the performance.
- **Listen and watch** the performers carefully. Be sure to also notice the design choices (sets, costumes and lighting).
- Please do not talk, whisper, unwrap candy or make loud noises during the production. Our theatre has some of the **best acoustics in the world**. The performers and fellow audience members can hear everything!
- Sit in your **assigned seats**; please do not move to empty seats.
- **Running, jumping** and climbing over or putting feet on the backs of the seats is strictly prohibited.
- Absolutely **no photography or recording** is permitted in the theatre (including camera phones).
- Please be **respectful** to our ushers, theatre patrons and the theatre itself.
- **Food, drinks and gum** are not allowed into the theatre.
- Many of our performances have a **no late seating** policy. If you arrive after the scheduled start time for the show, you will be seated at the discretion of the theatre staff. If latecomers are allowed to enter the theatre, you will typically be seated in the upper balcony so you do not disturb the performers or fellow audience members.
- **Cell phones, pagers** and anything that makes noise must be turned off during all performances.
- Please do not **text-message** during the performances. All cell phones, blackberries and hand-helds should be turned off or simply left at home.

Chaperones

- We recommend assigning one teacher/chaperone for every 10 students. Please make sure your chaperones are dispersed throughout your group. Please remind your chaperones that we rely on them to model good audience behavior for the students and to actively prevent inappropriate behavior.

Finally, we have found that a good experience at the theatre includes arriving **20 minutes early**. For most shows late seating is not permitted.

Thank you for your help. We look forward to seeing you at the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University.