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A Brief History In Dance

By Cindy Stewart

What is dancing?

The art of dance does not have a specific origin. From ancient times dance has been used to express many things. Some ancient cultures used dance in rituals, as part of meditation as well as in celebration and entertainment. What constitutes as dancing has been defined and re-defined by the cultures of the world and there is no single definition for the term. The word dance is derived from the Frankish term "dintjan." The term evolved with the French language into the modern term, "danser."

The art of dance and the art of music have long gone hand in hand. Some say dance evolved from the wild gesticulations of an ancient bard, who hopped from foot to foot, waving his hands in the air, singing his story to a crowd. To some, dance is any movement to a rhythmic sound, while to others it is any non-verbal communication. However, most will agree that dance is a form of expression, commonly accompanied by some form of music. There are even dances, for example, tap dance, that create their own sound.

Early forms of dance

There are many different kinds of dancing throughout the world and throughout history. In ancient times dancing was common practice in harvest festivals and many of the earliest recorded dances were performed ritually, in prayer and in thanks for health and bounty.

One early form of ritual dance is mandala meditations a kind of active meditation that energizes the body while allowing the mind the wander freely.

Another early form of dance is folk dance. All across Europe and through parts of china and some basic kinds of folkdance developed in simple step patterns that create geometric shapes.

Pairs Dancing

Pas de Deux is a French term that means "the step of two." This kind of dance is partnered and usually based upon intricate choreography between two dancers. It is a term used specifically in ballet, though

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it can be applied to many other dances, ranging in formality from square dancing to ballroom dancing. Dances like the flamenco and the tango are also pairs dances.

Modern/contemporary dance

Dance has changed dramatically in the past fifty years. Modern/ contemporary dance steps away from the rules of classical ballet and moves to encompass alternative styles. The results are often dynamic, partially acrobatic and extremely eclectic.

Contemporary performances sometimes incorporate music and dance styles from other cultures.

Likewise, social dancing has also changed. In the clubs and at the shows dancing has evolved still more. Every musical genre seems to have a specific movements best suited to it.

Dance therapy

Essentially returning to the most basic forms of dancing, dance therapy looks to the movement of the body to restore the spirit and calm the mind. It can be wild or more quietly meditative.

Cindy Stewart has been dancing since the age of 3. Now, as a Mother of 3 young girls, she teaches many forms of dance to other youngsters. Learn more about dancing by visiting her Web site

<http://www.noweverybodydance.com>

today.

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By Marta Bercy – General Director

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MARTA BERCY Born in Havana, Cuba. Modern Dance Teacher and Choreographer. As of 1987 she works as a Teacher in the "Centro de Promoción de la Danza " (Center of Dance Promotion), under the main direction of Laura Alonso. She is General Director of the International Modern Dance and AfroCuban Dances Workshop, and continues her work as a Teacher and Choreographer in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

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