



UCWDC® Judge Certification Couples Dance Fundamentals Curriculum

Section 1: The Dances – Basic Concepts

Triple Two, Polka, Nightclub, Cha Cha, Waltz, Two Step, East Coast, and West Coast Swing

I. Core Concepts - 8 Dances

A. Timing

1. Definitions

- a. Time Signatures: Waltz: 3/4, all other dances 4/4.
- b. Dancer's Timing: Stepping on the correct beat of the music with relations to figures/patterns in each dance.
- c. Strike of Weight & Degree of Weight Change
 - i. Part of the moving foot makes contacts with the floor.
 - ii. Transfer of weight from one foot to the other.
 - iii. Amounts of weight transfer.

B. Rhythm

1. Definitions

- a. Rhythm (Music Definition): Regular occurrence of accented beats.
- b. Rhythm: (Dance Definition): Accented steps that correspond to the regular beats.
- c. Syncopation (Music Definition): Temporary displacement of accented beats.
- d. Syncopation (Dance Definition): A change in regular accented beats for a limited time and return to normal rhythm.

2. Measured Vs. Non-Measured

- a. Measured Dance: figures/patterns continually match measures of music.
- b. Non-Measured dance: are based on 6 counts and do not match each measure.

3. Dance Rhythms

- a. Audio Recognition: Various ways to vocally express rhythm(s) of each dance.
- b. Visualization of Rhythm: Movement depicts rhythm(s) of the dance, apparent in time value of steps.

C. Motion

1. Definitions

- a. Repetitive Action which defines the dance.
- b. Repetitive Actions which facilitate the dance.
- c. Occurs through weight changes and rhythm.

2. Visualization of Motion

- a. Match movement and steps to accented beats.
- b. Acceleration and Deceleration
- c. Difference in time value of steps specific to the dance



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D. Character

1. Definitions
 - a. Culmination of Timing, Rhythm and Motion
 - b. Emotional context per dance
 - c. Story Line
2. Visualization of Character

E. Defining the Dance

1. Definitions - “Signature Figures” and “Signature Variations”
 - a. A particular series of steps (patterns/figures) common to each dance
 - b. Identifies the foundation of the dance.
 - c. Signature figure variations build upon the foundation of the base figure.
2. “Signature Figures & Variations” Implications
 - a. Must be present throughout a majority of the dance.
 - b. Absence or lack of indicates the dance is not defined.

F. Spatial Structure

1. Definitions
 - a. Organized collection of signature figures which visually show the expected use of the floor.
 - b. Appropriate Collection of Signature Figures & Variations
2. Progressive Spatial Structure
 - a. Counterclockwise movement around the floor.
 - b. Natural flow of the dance must be maintained.
Examples: Triple Two: wide weaving, curving, banking.
Waltz: diagonal, linear, rotational.
Polka: narrow weaving, rotating, streamlining.
Two Step: weaving, streamlining, catapulting.
 - c. Phrase changes should address an appropriate wall.
 - d. Ninety degree turns perpendicular to the edge of the floor, used to block choreography to face the front are only allowed at the end of a wall; curving or angling is appropriate.
3. Non-Progressive Spatial Structure (West Coast and Nightclub)
 - a. Basic pattern begins with a slot parallel to the edge of the floor.
 - b. Natural flow and figures of the dance must be maintained.
 - c. Geometric shapes are appropriate.
Examples: West Coast: swing in a rectangle or sets of boxes



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Nightclub: diamonds, squares, and circles

4. Non-Progressive Spatial Structure - Cha Cha and East Coast
 - a. Patterns may or may not travel from the starting position.
 - b. Travel may occur when open space is available and must not interfere with another couple.
 - c. Patterns may or may not return to the original position.
 - d. Patterns may be linear and/or rotational.