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## **Dance as Universal Language**

Dance is presented as a form of language that transcends not only cultures but also species. The authors describe 5 absolute favourite styles: 1) Latin, Salsa and Ballroom, 2) Breakdance or 'B-boying', 3) Tahitian Dance, 4) Ballet, 5) Flamenco.

**Key words:** Dance, styles of dance, language of dance, dancers.

This is a big world, but even so, there are specific things that we all can understand without question. One is the art of dance. The art of dance is understood everywhere, it speaks only one language that every spirited dancer knows. Competitions, recitals, shows, all types of performances hold all the same power and passion. Dance has been in our world for as long as there were people here to dance the dances. There is a spirit in dance that speaks all languages [4].

Dance is as universal language as music. Dance is a human story. Ethnic dancing can tell us who we are and where we came from. In exploring forms of

dancing you can transport yourself to another culture [10]. Dance is a way of expression, an identity. As with most traditions, Dance is different around the world, in every country that you travel to. Certain genres can identify a particular destination, a way of life. As with music, it is highly emotive [6].

Dance is a form of language that transcends not only cultures but also species. We may not have the ability to comprehend the sounds that male birds make, but we can instinctively interpret their gestures as they compete for a mate by showing off their dance moves. Similarly, before our ancestors developed linguistic skills, they communicated with each other through body language. They expressed their anger, hope and love with movement. Today, we continue to do the same; dance is a part of us and has always been. Dancers are storytellers who share their stories with their bodies.

According to some researches, there are 5 absolute favourite styles: 1) *Latin, Salsa and Ballroom* (they originated from Latin America and the Caribbean during the 1920's ). Cuba is the most famous home of Salsa dancing, it's a great destination to check it out and really get a taste for the style [3; 1]; 2) *Breakdance* or 'B-boying' is a style of Street Dance that has originated as part of a hip hop culture among youths in New York City in the 1970's. This dance style has gained popularity worldwide, particularly in the USA, Brazil, Cambodia, South Korea, Japan [11]; 3) *Tahitian Dance* originated from Tahiti and the French Polynesia. In 1776–1780 Captain James Cook sailed to the Island and his artist managed to capture the image of the dancers of the island. The style is very tribal and Tahitian drumming is used for the beat. The costumes of the dancers included undecorated tapa cloth for the males and tapa cloth with feathers and tassels for the woman, with head dresses and coconuts. The dancing includes strong hip movements and stomping. This style later developed into the Hula dance of Hawaii with the beautiful hip swings and grass skirts [7]; 4) *Ballet* is a type of performance dance, a timeless dance style that tells a story. It originated in Italy in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, later developing into a concert dance in France and Russia. It has since become a widespread, highly technical form of dance with its own vocabulary. Ballet dancers are very strictly taught and have to have the best fitness, flexibility and gracefulness. The most popular moves include Arabesque, Chasse, Plie and Pirouette. Point footwork is particularly key in this dance genre, with point shoes helping achieve this. Point shoes have blocks of wood at the bottom of the shoe, enabling the dancer to balance on a full pointed toe. Famous Ballet productions are *Swan Lake* [8] and *The Nutcracker* [9]. These performances can be seen all over the world but different dance companies; 5) *Flamenco* is a genre of music, song and dance from Andalusia, Southern Spain, founded in the 18th Century. This genre includes 'cante' (Singing), 'torque' (guitar playing), 'baile' (dance) and 'palmas' (handclaps). 'Flama' in Spanish means flame, hence the stunning red dresses connoting the fieriness and passion of the dance. The highlight of Flamenco [5], for me, has got to be the classic and classy style, the graceful dancers and amazing voice and guitar accompaniment [6; 2].

The arm movements, the fluid body waves, the turns, the leap, the poses, every aspect of dance has a center, a core. This is where all dancers from all over the world relate, universally. If you put two dancers in a studio from opposite sides of the

world, they would in no way be able to converse, but turn the music on and the connection begins. They begin to experiment, observe each others style and technique; they begin to come together in the final masterpiece. They use each others strengths to bring out the best in them both [4].

Regardless of which languages we speak, regardless of where we call home, we can all find common ground through dance. Dance fosters collaboration and trust by breaking down barriers in a magical way, which is difficult to describe but can certainly be felt by all. Dancing will not cure diseases, will not end famines nor will it fight to bring peace. But as a universal language, dance speaks of joy and a hope that can never be taken away [2].

In others cases, while dance cannot communicate specific events or ideas, it is a universal language that can communicate emotions directly and sometimes more powerfully than words. The French poet Stéphane Mallarmé declared that the dancer, “writing with her body, ... *suggests* things which the written work could ... [12].

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