

## Ballet Terms

**Adagio** – A series of exercises following the center practice, consisting of a succession of slow and graceful movements, which may be simple, or of the most complex character, performed with fluidity and apparent ease.

**Air, En L'** – In the air.

**Allegro** – brisk, lively.

**Allonge** – Extended, outstretched.

**Arabesque** – One of the basic poses in ballet. It is a position of the body supported on one leg, with the other leg extended behind or at right angles to it.

**Assemble** – Assembled or joined together.

**Attitude** – A particular pose in dancing. It is a position on one leg with the other lifted in back or front. The knee is bent at an angle of ninety degrees and well turned out.

**Balance**- Rocking step. This step is an alternation of balance, shifting weight from one foot to the other. It may be done crossing the foot either front or back.

**Balancoire, En** – Like a seesaw. A grand battement when executed with a continuous swinging motion. As the leg swings forward the body leans backward, then as the leg swings backward the body leans forward.

**Ballon** – Bounce. Ballon is the light, elastic quality in jumping in which the dancer bounds up from the floor, pauses a moment in the air and descends lightly and softly.

**Ballonne** – Bounced, ball-like. The dancer springs into the air, simultaneously executing a battement, then lands in demi-plie' with the working foot sur le cou-de-pied.

**Battement** – Beating. A beating or lifting action of the extended leg.

**Batterie** – A collective term meaning the entire vocabulary of beats.

**Bras** – Arms

**Port de Bras** – Carriage of the arms. A movement or series of movements made by passing the arm or arms through various positions.

**Brise** – Broken, breaking.

**Cabriole** – Caper. A step of elevation in which the extended legs are beaten in the air.

**Chaine's** – Chains, links.

**Changement** – Springing steps in the fifth position.

**Chasse** – Chased. A step where one foot literally chases the other out of its position.

**Choreographer** – This is the term applied to one who composes or invents ballets or dances.

**Choreography** – This term is used to describe the actual steps, groupings, and patterns of a ballet or dance composition.

**Ciseaux** - Scissors. This is a scissor like movement made by opening the feet to a wide second position sur les pointes, or by jumping into the air and opening both legs to the second position en l'air.

**Class** - The daily lesson taken by dancers throughout their career.

**Cloche, en** - Like a bell.

**Contretemps** – Beating against time.

**De Cote'** – Sideways. Used to indicate that a step is to be made to the side, either to the right or left.

**Cou-de-pied** – “Neck” of the foot.

**Coupe** – Cut, cutting. A small, intermediary step done as a preparation, or impetus for some other step.

**Croise** – Crossed

**En Croix** – In the shape of a cross. Indicates that an exercise is to be executed to front, second, and back, or vice versa.

**En Dedan** – Inward

**De'gage** – Disengaged. A quick brush off of the floor.

**En Dehor** – Outward.

**Devant** – In front. This term may refer to a step, movement, or the placing of a limb in front of the body.

**Developpe** – Developed.

**E'chappe** – Escaping movement. (flat and en pointe)

**Emboite** - Fitted together, “boxed”.

**Entrachat** – Interweaving or braiding.

**Extension** – Term used to describe the ability of a dancer to raise and hold the leg en l'air.

**Flick-flac** – A crack, as of a whip.

**Fondue** – Sinking down, melting.

**Fouette** – Whipped

**Gauche, A** – To the left

**Glissade** – glide. Glissade is a terre, a terre step is to link other steps

**Jambe, La** - the leg

**Jete** – Thrust. There is a wide variety of jete's and they may be done in all directions

**Labanotation** - This is a system of dance notation invented by the Hungarian-born teacher Rudolf Van Laban.

**Mains, Les** – The hands.

**Opposition** – This term refers to an arm position in which the arm used is in opposition to the leg used.

**Ouvert, Ouverte** - Open, opened. It may refer to positions (the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> positions of the feet are ouvertes), limbs, directions, or certain exercises or steps.

**Pas** – step

**Pas de basque** – Basque step. It is an alternating step in three counts with a swinging movement from side to side. The movement may be done either saute' or glisse'.

**Pas de bourre'e** – A progression of the pointes or demi-pointes by a series of small, even steps with the feet close together.

**Pas de Chat** – Large cat step.

**Pas de cheval** – Horse step.

**Pas de deux** – dance for two.

**Passe** – pass.

**Penche** – any leaning, inclining of the body.

**Petit-** Little, small.

**Pique** – Perch.

**Pirouette** – Whirl or spin. The motive power being obtained from a combination of plie', arm movement, and focus.

**Plie** – Bent, bending. A bending of the knee or knees.

**Port de bras** – Carriage of the arms.

**Releve** – Raised.

**Retire** – Withdrawn.

**Reverence, grande** – Big reverence or curtsy. Acknowledgment of the audiences applause.

**Rond de jambe** – Circular movement of the leg.

**Rotation** – Rotation. Refers to the rotation of the leg in the hip socket.

**Saut de basque** – Basque jump.

**Saute** – A hop on one foot, landing on the same foot – leaving the other leg to do anything the choreographer has asked for.

**Seconde, A' La** – To the second or the side.

**Sissonne** – Scissor. Sissonne ouverte being taken off two feet and finishing on one foot, and sissonne fermee' being taken off two feet and finishing on two feet.

**Soubresaut** – Sudden spring or bound.

**Sous-sus** – under-over. Sous-ses is a releve' in the fifth position.

**Spotting** – This is a term given to the movement of the head in pirouette. This rapid movement or snap of the head gives the impression that the face is always forward and prevents the dancer from becoming dizzy.

**Temps Leve** – Time raised; that is, raising movement.

**Tendu, Tendue** – stretched.

**Terre, A** – On the ground

**Tombe'** – Falling.

**Tour** – Turn. A turn of the body.

**Tour en L'air** – Turn in the air.

**Turn-out** – This is the ability of the dancer to turn his feet and legs out from the hip joints. This turned-out position gives the dancer the freedom of movement.

**Vole** - Flown, flying.