

THE DANCE AND HOW IT RELATES TO MUSIC

Dance and music are a perfect marriage.

Everything starts here! Listen to music again and again.

The music will give you the emotion first then the steps.

If the music does not move you select something else.

You cannot create steps then add the music.

Whenever you are stuck for movement, return to the music. It will always give you the answer.

Listen to the music over and over again to hear every accent, every beat, every transition and every nuance.

Dance is visual music.

When music, choreography and emotion are in unison, working for the same goal, it will give you goose bumps.

When not working together, it is just a bunch of steps, not dance.

Hit the accents in the music.

Do not dance through the accents or breaks. Acknowledging the accents will give your number excitement, strength and help you keep the movements clean and together.

THE RHYTHMIC PATTERNS:

A. Rhythm: Basic Beat (Derbecki, tambourine, tar Tabl Beledi etc.)

- a. Direct Pulsation.
- b. Double Time.
- c. Half Time.
- d. Counter Time.

1. MELODY: - The emotional content. This gives a visual speaking kinship between music and dance.

2. HARMONY: - The underlying melodic line. Not used in Middle Eastern music.

1. Movement on the phrase is most dramatic, the most emotional and the most visual.
2. Movement should attack with the attack of the phrase and reflect the mood.
3. Pure rhythm phrasing must be completed in the movement. Stay on meter.

1. Learn what the composer intended to express.
2. Become acquainted with the subject.
3. Understand the mood and background. Find an inspiration for movements, theme and costume.

3. **LEARN THE MUSIC:** Know it through your entire being.

- A. Try not to edit or cut the music.
- B. Music and dance are a marriage.
- C. Dance must have something to say. A routine may be pretty child but is a moron.
- D. Do your research. Know how the people of the area people dress, look and behave.
- E. Dance without the element of music is impossible, rhythm is music and there is no dance without rhythm.
- F. Dance is the rhythm of the heart and breath.

4. **REALLY HEAR THE MUSIC:**

- A. Train the heart to hear and the body will follow.
- B. Really listen to the music.
- C. Be aware of suspended movement. (e.g. step pivots)
- D. Be aware of accent and phrasing.
- E. Be aware of the swell and fall of the sound.
- F. Be aware of punctuation in the phrase.

*Do **not ever** use music you do not know or that you have not practiced with. Do not let musicians convince you that "If you are a real dancer that you can dance to anything".*

The rhythmic patterns are closely related to the dramatic designs of the dancer.
Remember it is a marriage of music and dance.

Occidental or western music has three basic elements rhythm, melody and harmony. The rhythm is the pulsation of the music, usually having recurring accents. The choreographer has to be familiar with these accents and also know how to count the music. Creating on just the beats is the easiest form of choreography. This is great for group pieces as it gives a feeling of unity. When working with rhythm one may work on the beat = single time. Double time and more can be used. This makes a rhythmical dance design within the phrase.

Movement on the melody identifies with the emotional content of the music. This should have the feeling that no other movement would work at this time. Musicians need to remember that their fingers cover less space than the limbs of a body can move. So very fast playing by musicians is a waste of time. A dancer cannot move that fast. The movements are lost. Movement gives a kinship between music and dance.

Eastern music has only rhythm and melody so we will not discuss harmony at all.

5. DANCE AND THE MUSICAL PHRASE:

Movement on the phrase is the most dramatic, the most emotional for visualization. The movement should attack with the attack of the phrase. It should reflect the mood of the phrase. It should translate the mood of the phrase. The musical phrase must always be completed. The secret in emotional satisfaction lies in the understanding of the phrase ending. No dancer can ever overlook this.

6. DANCE COMPOSITION:

Keep your phrasing, dynamics, mood and structure clearly defined. Theme development and variations should be apparent. West should go to the east to learn the science of movement (*La Meri*) Understand the mood and the background of what the composer intended to express. Understand that and you have a good start to finding your inspiration.

You need to know the music so well that you can hum every note. Do not force movements and do not take the first one that shows itself. At first you are learning the music. Know it in your subconscious before accepting the steps.

Never cut the music without a highly competent musician guiding you. Unconsidered cuts can be disastrous like the unnecessary amputation of a limb. If your time limit does not work with what you have chosen then pick another piece. The composer created that music as it is needed for you to express the emotions you need to convey. If one departs from the norm one must do so from the strength of complete knowledge not from laziness of the easy way out.

7. DANCE MOVEMENT AND INSTRUMENTATION:

Dance is motion. There must be drive to express an idea. It also has to be led by emotion.

Do not begin movements in your lower limbs. Emotion begins in the upper torso. You feel with your heart. Movements move outward from this center. Do not overstuff your works. Think of the instrumentation when choosing your movements. It is not enough just to know moves. Below are a list of instruments and the movements that portray them

1. ***Ney or any wind instrument:*** The energy and movement comes from the upper part of the chest, into the air above the head. Use arms up above the head. Think upper-body, throat and above the head.
2. ***Oud:*** This string instrument has a tight sound that is strummed. Keep your

movements very controlled. The movements come from the chest down to the upper thigh. Use the middle part of the body and keep it contained when dancing to the oud.

3. ***Kanoun:*** This string instrument is plucked. Whatever the musician is playing on the instrument you are doing likewise. When dancing to a *kanoun* always treat it as a *trembelo*. It is shimmy time. Use both hips and shoulders. No undulations here at all! Keep it tight to the body. These are tight shimmies that correspond with the sound of the *kanoun*.

4. ***Violin:*** When dancing to a violin think of how the musician plays this instrument. Flowing, swaying, out and expanding movements. Sweep out from your heart. Include everyone. The movements come from the chest to the lower thigh area. If the violinist plays faster it means tighter closer movements.

5. ***Arabic Keyboard:*** When the keyboard sounds like an accordion the movements are very low with big, earthy, heavy hip rotations etc.

6. ***Percussion:*** Any time a percussion instrument is being played you will shimmy and accent the beats. Never undulate in a drum solo. Always use hips or shoulders. Know your rhythms, this way you will know what to expect.

8. A NOTE ON MOVEMENT

There is no standard terminology for Arabic Dance so we use the standards set by mainstream dance that are acceptable throughout the world.

We will start with the two types of movements and then break it down into style for more definition.

A. TYPES OF MOVEMENTS:

1. ***MOVING STEPS:*** Moving steps provide a base upon which other steps are developed. They are moving or locomotive steps. They are designed to move you round the stage or dance space.

2. ***STATIONARY STEPS:*** These are movements that are done in place. I am sure you can think of many.

9. STYLES

1. ***LAYERING:*** This is the process of putting one step on top of another and doing the two together simultaneously. Like walking and doing a shimmy or

undulation at the same time. It can include movements from the two levels below.

2. **PERCUSSIVE:** Characterized by a sharp, exact and precise quality. Dancing to the rhythms.

3. **LYRICAL:** These movements are smooth and flowing. They have a wave like watery quality. Movements flow one into the other. Dancing to the melody.

4. **TURNS:** We do many types of different turns and spins. All involve moving around your-self in different manners.

We also use our whole body and not just our extremities like other dance forms. We use: head, arms & hands, shoulders, chest, torso, stomach, hips, legs ,feet and hips as well as steps. All have their unique moves. For more on learning the dance look for the book on composition of dance. Also read **Mosaic of Music – The Mystery of Music & Dance**