

HOT TIPS FOR INTERMEDIATE DANCERS

HOW CAN YOU RECOGNIZE A DANCER'S *LEVEL OF DANCE*?

BEGINNERS tend to dance with their “feet.” That means, if they want to step forward with their left foot, they move their left foot first and then their body follows. In other words, they are leading with their feet.

INTERMEDIATE dancers tend to dance more with their knees and hips. To move, they move first with their knees and/or hips and then their feet follow.

ADVANCED dancers tend to dance with their center. For instance, if they want to move forward with their right foot, they move their center forward, leading with their right rib cage. This makes for a very different look on the dance floor (notice how the pros dance with their center).

DO YOU KNOW THE ANSWERS?

- 1) What is a dancer's instrument? Answer: The dance floor.
- 2) How does a dancer play their instrument? Answer: With their feet.
- 3) What are **four** things you must do to be a great dancer (or for that matter, to be great in any physical sport)?
 - A. **Stand:** Know how to stand with your center aligned over your balls of your feet, with your chest open and in balance.
 - B. **Walk:** Pelvis must always be in alignment with body. Depending on the type of dance (i.e we walk either in smooth or rhythmic style) the pelvis must be positioned to fit the movement desired. To move smoothly, keep the pelvis forward and the butt tucked in. In contrast, to move rhythmically, keep the pelvis tilted back (butt out). So, on the dance floor, smooth dances (i.e. Night Club 2 Step) require that your pelvis is tilted forward so that you can take *elongated steps* that seem to glide. For more rhythmic dances (i.e. WCS), you need to keep your butt out and *move more quickly* at times.
 - C. **Breath:** When we breath, we allow our body to move through its sockets and full range of motion without loosing our “center.” In other words, the body is not in a “locked position” when we are breathing.

D. **Keep Time:** Our feet keep time as we move with our center (i.e. 1 and a 2 and a 3 and a.....)

- 4) What are the roles of our **Upper Body** and **Lower Body** in dance?
These two parts of your body have two distinct roles. The upper body creates all the *Illusion* (i.e. of grace, fluidity of motion, funk, etc.) and the lower body does all the real work or execution of *Skill* (i.e. taking specific steps at the right time, etc. as in any sport).
- 5) What part of your body leads a turn? Don't turn with your feet; turn with your center. i.e. to turn right, step right and then imagine your center moving $\frac{1}{4}$ turn to the right (repeat until you've turned to where you want to go. In short, turning to the right is just stepping and moving your center, stepping and moving your center.
- 6) Where is the juncture of the couple's hands during various turns?
A. When the woman turns, the couple's hands go over HER HEAD during the turn.
B. When the man turns, couple's hands go over HIS HEAD during the turn.
C. When they both turn at the same time (i.e. a barrel roll), their hands go BETWEEN THEM IN THE MIDDLE.
- 7) In general, during most of your dancing, your body should be aligned equally between both legs (i.e. 50/50) . True or False?
The answer is False. Your body should be aligned fully committed with your center over one leg on any one beat.

***NOTE:** These ideas were distilled by Ginger from various workshops with numerous teachers, particularly Mary Heodeman, Mario Robau, and Angel Figueroa.*