

eXit SPACE

SCHOOL OF DANCE

Basic Ballet Course Syllabus Summer Series – 2022

Class Meetings: *Wednesdays 6:30-7:30pm from June 22 – August 17
theNEST Studio B – 6600 1st Ave NE Seattle, WA 98115*

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Course Description

The roots of Ballet date back to European ethnic/folk dances copied by the Italian court during the Renaissance for aristocratic entertainment. An Italian social dance with choreographic elements, “balletto” or ballet, made its way to France in the 16th century where dancing masters instructed children and choreographed increasingly elaborate performances with sets, costumes and story elements. In the 17th century court, King Louis XIV emerged as a figurehead of ballet’s codification, establishing the Royal Academy of Dance where Pierre Beauchamp established the five traditional rotated positions. Russia, subsequently, played a major role in Ballet’s further development and Russian dancers are often credited with “perfecting” the technique. Through the Baroque Period and into the Romantic Era and beyond, Ballet gained six codified teaching styles which are often adapted and/or mixed for ballet classes around the world (the Vaganova, Cecchetti Method, and RAD methods being the most common).

eXit SPACE acknowledges that ballet has a long history of exclusion – from socio-economic status, to skin color, body type, age, and level of training – but are proud to be one of a growing number of dance education facilities that stands on the firm notion that ballet is for everybody and every body with the intention of elevating individual artistic voices. As a Basic Ballet student, you will be guided through the structure of a dance class and the etiquette required from all dancers in a studio, learning fundamentals of the technique through a traditional class structure: ballet barre followed by center floor and locomotor technique. At barre, students will learn basic vocabulary from pliés and tendús to fondus and frappés, before moving out to the center floor where they practice stationary turns, extensions, and jumps. Basic Ballet students learn to waltz, leap, and turn across the floor with ample opportunities to modify movements as needed for individual safety and with a constant emphasis on dynamic alignment, strength development, body awareness, safety, artistic expression, and quality of movement throughout. Your teacher is committed to being held accountable and to providing options for modifications and alternative movements frequently so that all dancers can participate in ways that feel safe and successful.

Course objectives (Adapted from St. Olaf College dance dept. syllabus)

At the end of the session, dancers should have increased understanding of the following concepts:

1. **Body Awareness:** Explore elements of your unique body, its function and ability.
2. **Physical Alignment:** The ability to maintain correct musculoskeletal positioning during movement and stillness.
3. **Coordination:** The ability to efficiently link movement patterning via body/brain connection.
4. **Movement Clarity:** The ability to consistently demonstrate accurate execution of intended movements with energy, shape, and line. A basic understanding of initiation points.
5. **Conditioning:** A balance of flexibility, strength, and endurance.
6. **Memory & Recall:** Increased ability to learn and perform movement combinations in a limited timeframe.
7. **Artistry:** The ability to integrate technical skills with intuition, personal presence, and musicality.

8. **Ballet Vocabulary:** Establish a functional language for ballet description as well as a basic understanding of: parallel vs. turn out (rotation), point vs. flex, demi pli , tend , degage, rond des jambe   terre, sur le cou-de-pied, frapp , etc.
9. **Historical & Cultural Context:** A general understanding of the roots and pioneers of Ballet technique.
10. **Safety:** The ability to execute movement functionally, anatomically aligned, and with spatial awareness so as to reduce the risk for injury.
11. **Have FUN:** This class is for you. Ask questions, offer feedback, and know that above all else, the goal is for you to enjoy yourself.

Class Etiquette

Dance classes across the board rely on a fundamental set of etiquette expectations in order to maximize student experience, safety, and class progression:

1. **Be prepared:** Please wear workout clothes that allow for freedom of movement and make you feel confident. You may choose to wear traditional ballet attire such as tights/leggings and a leotard, or form-fitting yoga attire such as leggings and a t-shirt. Ballet slippers are highly encouraged to maximize your safety and experience. Don't forget to bring a water bottle and tie your hair back!
2. **Arrive on time:** Please arrive several minutes before the start of class and avoid entering late. This is for your own safety and to minimize distractions for students who do arrive on time.
3. **Take care of our floor:** There are no street shoes allowed on the dance floor. If you require footwear, it must be light-soled, non-scuffing, and indoor-only.
4. **No food:** Gum, candy, and food are not allowed in the studio. Dancers chewing gum will be asked to spit it out.
5. **Get permission:** Please get consent before filming, photographing, or making physical contact with another dancer. Please do not share any videos on social media unless you have received explicit consent from everyone filmed.

Injury, Disability, and Physical Integration

eXit SPACE believes that dance is for everybody and every body; your teacher is committed to creating a safe space for students of all physical abilities to explore the joy of movement through ballet. If you require modifications or physical transpositions due to injury, disability, or comfort that are not immediately offered, please don't be afraid to ask! Most of the time, a series of options will be provided for any given exercise. For some of the people joining us in class, please bear in mind that the most accessible space is a **scnt free** space. Please help us create an equitable environment by arriving smelling like only yourself.

Absences & Makeups

Dancers are permitted a maximum of two makeup classes per session to be used within the current session or the session to follow. Makeups are permitted in any basic class or any level-appropriate drop-in class at eXit SPACE or theNEST. Please email miranda@exitspacedance.com to schedule your makeup class in advance.

Recommended Reading & Viewing

- *Ballet Class for Beginners* with David Howard (DVD)
- *Ballet Class: Intermediate & Advanced* with David Howard (DVD)
- *Apollo's Angels* by Jennifer Homans (Book)
- *Night's Dancer: The Life of Janet Collins* by Yael Tamar Lewin (Book)

Welcome to eXit SPACE!

Ballet Terminology

Adagio In *song*, Adagio means "slowly", and in *ballet* it means *slow, enfolding movements*. In a classical ballet class, the *Adagio* portion of the lesson concentrates on slow movements to improve the dancer's ability to control the leg and increase extension (i.e., to bring the leg into high positions with control and ease).

Allegro From the Italian, meaning gay or joyful. Dance variation characterized by jumps and a faster tempo. In *petit allegro* the dancers execute smaller jumps such as *petit jeté* and *entrechat*, while the *grand allegro* is characterized by bigger jumps such as *sissonne ouverte* or *grand jeté*.

Arabesque The position of the body supported on one leg, with the other leg extended behind the body with the knee straight.

Assemblé (ah sem blay) Sometimes also *pas assemblé*. Literally "assembled". A movement where the first foot performs a *battement glissé/degagé*, "swishing" out. With the dancer launching into a jump, the second foot then swishes up under the first foot. The feet meet together in mid-air, and the dance lands with both feet on the floor at the same time, in third or fifth position.

Attitude A position in which the dancer stands on one leg (known as the supporting leg) while the other leg (working leg) is lifted and well turned out with the knee bent at approximately 90-degree angle. The lifted or working leg can be behind (*derrière*), in front (*devant*), or on the side (*à la seconde*) of the body. If the leg in *attitude derrière* is resting on the floor, then the pose is known as B-plus.

Avant Forwards, Front. A step travelling *en avant* moves forwards, towards the audience, e.g. *sissonne en avant*.

Balancé It is usually executed in three counts The dancer typically begins in fifth position, in *plié*. Before the first count, one foot extends in a *degagé*, typically to second position (though you can balancé front or back, as well). Balancé is often confused with *pas de valse*, a waltz step. However, when doing a balancé the three steps make a "down, up, down" motion (*fondu, relevé, fondu*), whereas in *pas de valse*, a true waltz, the motion is "down, up, up" (*fondu, relevé, relevé*).

Battement It is a kicking movement of the working leg (i.e. the leg that is performing a technique). *Battements* are usually executed in front (*en avant* or *à la quatrième devant*), to the side (*à la seconde*) or back (*en arrière* or *à la quatrième derrière*).

- **Battement développé** is usually a slow *battement* in which the leg is first lifted to *retiré* position, then fully extended passing through *attitude* position.
- **Battement fondu** is a *battement* (usually slower) from a *fondu* (both knees bent, working foot on the *cou-de-pied* of the supporting leg) position and extends until both legs are straight. It can be executed *double*.



- **Battement frappé** is a *battement* where the foot moves from sur la cou de pied position next to the other ankle, and extends out to a straight position, by doing so hitting the floor (the so-called *frappé*). In the Russian school the foot is wrapped around the ankle, rather than flexed and does not strike the floor. In this case, the *frappé* is given by the working foot striking the ankle of the supporting leg. *Battements frappés* can be executed *double*.
- **Battement glissé** is a rapid *battement* normally taken to 2-3 centimeters off the floor (literally means a "gliding" *battement*). See *battement tendu jeté*.
- **Battement lent** is a slow *battement*, normally taken as high as possible, which involves considerable control and strength. Both legs remain straight for the whole duration of the movement.
- **Battement tendu** is a *battement* where the extended foot never leaves the floor. The working foot slides forward or sideways from the fifth or first position to reach the fourth or second position, lifting the heel off the floor and stretching the instep. It forms the preparation for many other positions, such as the *ronds de jambe* and *pirouette* positions.
- **Battement tendu jeté** (Russian school) is a *battement* normally taken to anywhere from 2 cm off the floor up to 45 degrees, depending on the style. It is the same as *battement dégagé* (Cecchetti) or *battement glissé* (French school).
- **Grand battement** is a powerful *battement* action where the dancer takes the leg as high as possible, while the supporting leg remains straight.
- **Grand battement en cloche** is a *grand battement* which continuously "swishes" forwards and backwards passing through the first position of the feet (literally: large *battement* with pendulum movement).
- **Petit battement** is a *battement* action where the bending action is at the knee, while the upper leg and thigh remain still. The working foot quickly alternates from the *cou-de-pied* position in the front to the *cou-de-pied* position in the back, slightly opening to the side.



Batterie A whole family of techniques involving jumps, where the feet cross quickly in front and behind each other, creating a flapping or "beating" effect mid-air and brushing through first position. Also called *beats* in the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) syllabus.

Chaînés This is a common abbreviation for *tours chaînés déboulés*, which is a series of quick turns on alternating feet with progression along a straight line or circle. They are also known as *chaînés tournés*. In classical ballet it is done on the pointes or [demi-pointes](#) (on the balls of the feet).

Changement de pied Literally "changing of feet." A jump in which the feet change positions in the air. For example, beginning in fifth position with the right foot front, *plié* and jump, switching the right to the back, landing with the left foot front in fifth position. In the Vaganova's method, *petit changement de pieds* indicates a *changement* where the feet barely leave the floor.

Chassé, literally "to chase." A slide forwards, backwards, or sideways with both legs bent, then springing into the air with legs meeting and straightened. It can be done either in a gallop (like children

pretending to ride a horse) or by pushing the first foot along the floor in a *plié* to make the springing jump up.

Croisé, croisée Meaning: crossed. One of the directions of stands facing one of the corners of the stage; his/her body is placed at an oblique angle to the audience. The leg may be crossed to the front or to the back.

Dégagé Meaning: to disengage

Demi Meaning: half. Applied to *plié* and *pointe* and other movements or positions to indicate a smaller or lesser version.

Derrière At or to the back side. For example, a *battement tendu derrière* is a *battement tendu* taken to the rear. point/face behind you

Devant Literally "front." For example, *tendu devant* would mean stretching the foot to the front, or *attitude devant* would mean executing an *attitude* to the front. piont/face to front

Développé A common abbreviation for *battement développé*. A movement in which the leg is first lifted to *retiré* position, then fully extended passing through *attitude* position. It can be done in front (*en avant*), to the side (*à la seconde*), or to the back (*derrière*).

Échappé Literally "escaped". A movement done from a closed (first or fifth) position to an open (second or fourth) position.

Effacé, effacée Literally "erased" or "obscured". This direction is termed *ouvert* in the French method. *Effacé* is also used to qualify a pose in which the legs are open, not crossed. This pose may be taken *devant* or *derrière*.

Elevé Literally "rise". A *relevé* without the *plié*, so that the dancer simply rises directly to *demi* or *pointe* from flat feet all the way to the balls of the feet.

En croix Meaning "in the shape of a cross" or "the cross." This term is usually used when doing barre exercises such as *battement tendu* and *battement frappé*. The required movement is done to the front, then the side, then back and then again to the side (a cross shape).

En dedans Movement within a circle so that the leg starts at the back or the side and moves towards the front. For the right leg, this is a counter-clockwise circle. For the left leg, this is a clockwise circle. For instance, in a *ronds de jambe en dedans*, starting from first position, the foot (either left or right) would first reach *tendu* back, then move to *tendu* to the side and then front, to end again in first position. It is also considered an inside movement: in a *pirouette en dedans* the dancer spins towards the side of the supporting leg. The opposite is *en dehors*.

épaulement. The dancer



En dehors Literally "outwards". Movement within a circle so that the leg starts at the front or the side and moves towards the back. For the working leg, this is a clockwise circle. For instance, in a *ronds de jambe en dehors*, starting from first position, the foot (either left or right) would first reach *tendu* front, then move to *tendu* to the side and then back, to end again in first position. It is also considered an outside movement: in a *pirouette en dehors* the dancer spins towards the side of the working leg (the leg raised in *passé*). *En dedans* is the opposite. Many people have trouble and confuse *en dedans* and *en dehors*. *En dehors* can be remembered with the phrase "En dehors, out the door."

Épaulement Literally "shouldering". Rotation of the shoulders and head relative to the hips in a pose or a step.

Fondu Literally "to melt". Abbreviation for a *battement fondu*. A term used to describe a lowering of the body made by bending the knee of the supporting leg. Saint-Leon wrote, "Fondu is on one leg what a plie is on two."

Fouetté Literally "whipped". The term indicates either a turn with a quick change in the direction of the working leg as it passes in front of or behind the supporting leg, or a quick whipping around of the body from one direction to another. There are many kinds of *fouetté*: *petit fouetté* (*à terre*, *en demi-pointe* or *sauté*) and *grand fouetté* (*sauté*, *relevé* or *en tournant*). An introductory form for beginner dancers, executed at the *barre* is as follows: facing the *barre*, the dancer executes a *grand battement* to the side, then turns the body so that the lifted leg ends up in *arabesque* position.

Frappé Literally "hit" or "strike". See *Battement frappé* describing hitting the floor or an ankle with a moving foot.

Glissade Literally, to slide. This is a traveling step starting in fifth position with *demi-plié*: the front foot moves out to a point, both legs briefly straighten as weight is shifted onto the pointed foot, and the other foot moves in to meet the first. A *glissade* can be *en avant*, *en arrière*, *dessous*, and *dessus*; start in fifth position plie, push off back foot moving the front foot forward and bringing the back foot that you pushed off on in the front landing in fifth position.

Grand plié A full *plié*, or bending of the knees. The back should be straight and aligned with the heels, and the legs are turned out with knees over the feet. As a movement, it should be fluid. It may also be in preparation for another movement such as a leap.

Grand jeté A long horizontal jump, starting from one leg and landing on the other.

Jeté *Jeté* is a jump from one foot to the other

Pas de bourrée It consists of three quick steps i.e. behind, side, front.

Pas de chat "step of the cat". The dancer jumps sideways, and while in mid-air, bends both legs up (two *retirés*) bringing the feet up as high as possible, with knees apart.



Pas de cheval "step of the horse". The dancer does a *coupé* then a small *developpé* and *tendu* back into starting position.

Passé As a position *passé* means when a foot is placed near or on the other knee.

Piqué Literally "pricked". A movement in which the strongly pointed toe of the lifted and extended leg sharply lowers to hit the floor then immediately rebounds upward. Same for some as the term *pointé*. Also a movement in which the dancer transfers a stance from one leg in *plié* to the other leg by stepping out directly onto *pointe* or *demi-pointe* with a straight leg; for example, a *piqué arabesque*.

Pirouette A controlled turn on one leg, starting with one or both legs in *plié* and rising onto *demi-pointe* (usually for men) or *pointe* (usually for women). The non-supporting leg can be held in *retiré* position, or in *attitude*, *arabesque* level or second position. The pirouette may return to the starting position or finish in *arabesque* or *attitude* positions, or proceed otherwise. A pirouette is most often *en dehors* turning outwards toward the back leg, but can also be *en dedans* turning inwards toward the front leg. Turning technique includes *spotting*, in which a dancer executes a periodic, rapid rotation of the head that serves to fix the dancer's gaze on a single spot. Spotting is particularly important in traveling turns such as *tours chaînés* or *piqués* because it helps the dancer control the direction of travel while keeping balanced. *Pirouettes* can be executed with a single or multiple rotations.

Plié Literally "bent". A smooth and continuous bending of the knees. This can be *grand-plié*, a bend to the deepest position where the heels lift off the floor. For *demi-plié* the dancer bends knees until just below the classical hips while maintaining turnout at the joints, allowing the thighs and knees to be directly above the line of the toes.



Port de bras Literally "carriage of the arms".

Positions of the feet



Relevé Literally "lifted". Rising from any position to balance on one or both feet on at least *demi-pointe* which is heels off the floor or higher to full *pointe* where the dancer is actually balancing on the

top of the toes, supported in pointe shoes. Smoothly done in some versions, a quick little leap up in other schools.

Rond de jambe Literally "circle of the leg." Actually, half-circles made by the pointed foot, returning through first position to repeat; creating the letter 'D' on the floor. From front to back *rond de jambe en dehors*, or from back to front *rond de jambe en dedans*.

- **Rond de jambe à terre:** straightened leg with pointed toe remaining on the ground to sweep around.
- **Rond de jambe en l'air:** in the air. The leg is lifted to the side, movement is only below the knee. If the thigh is horizontal, the toe draws an oval approximately between the knee of the support leg and the second position in the air. If the thigh is in the lower *demi-position* then the oval is to the calf of the support knee.
- **Grand rond de jambe:** the leg is straightened and sustained at *grand battement* height, with the foot making the circle high. Requires advanced "extension" flexibility and strength. If not reversed, foot returns past the knee.

Saute Literally "jump".

Sissonne A jump done from two feet to one foot or in some cases two.

Soutenu en tournant An "easy" pivot in 5th position

Sur le cou-de-pied Literally means, "on the neck of the foot". This is a position in which the working foot is placed on the ankle of the supporting leg.



Tendu Literally, "stretched"; a common abbreviation for *battement tendu*. Either front, side, or backward

Tombé Literally to fall.

Turn-out, turnout A rotation of the leg from the hips, causing the knee and foot to also turn outward. Properly done, the ankles remain erect and the foot arch remains curved and supporting. Turn-out technique is a defining characteristic of Classical Ballet. Not all dancers do have a perfect turn-out; but it is definitely a measure for selection. In beginner classes, a less-than-perfect turn-out is tolerated to save stress to knee joints until the ability is acquired.

Waltz Can be used to describe a type of ballet music, counted in 3/4 music tempo (as "one, two, three").