

eXit SPACE

SCHOOL OF DANCE

Basic Jazz Course Syllabus Summer Series – 2022

Class Meetings: *Wednesdays 8-9pm from June 22 – August 17*
eXit SPACE Studio Sea – 410 NE 72nd St Seattle WA 98115

Instructor Details: *Tyra Kopf (she/her), ADP/YDP Faculty & Office Assistant*
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Course Description

Jazz can be traced back to seventeenth century African dance rituals characterized by polyrhythm, improvisation, and isolation. Vernacular Jazz was formally developed by Black Americans in the early 20th century alongside the evolution of jazz music as an embodiment of Black culture and liberation. Vernacular or authentic jazz refers to such forms as the Charleston, Lindy Hop, Jitterbug, and the Twist which were subsequently copied by white audiences as popularity increased. Jazz became concert dance when Black choreographer and anthropologist Katherine Dunham (1909–2006) brought works of performance ethnography to proscenium stages, having infused Caribbean dance and African Diasporan traditions into her modern-based works, giving way to a new era of popular performance. Subsequent artists adapted, appropriated, and reimagined jazz, which has now branched off to include lyrical jazz as well as commercial and Broadway jazz forms (informed by burlesque, vaudeville, and musical theater) now seen most commonly on stage and TV. Eugene Louis Faccuito (Luigi), Gus Giordano, and Matt Mattox furthered the evolution of the style in the mid to late 1900's and are training the next generation of teachers to this day.

This Basic Jazz course will honor that history of jazz through an emphasis on individuality and technique while focusing primarily on Euro-informed styles of theatrical and commercial jazz as well as their emphasis on clarity, rhythm, and theatricality. As a new student to jazz dance, you will be guided through the structure of a dance class and the etiquette required of all dancers in a studio. Aerobic warm-up exercises designed to center the body, increase strength and flexibility, and re-pattern movement habits will prepare the student to move more fully. Movement combinations center and across the floor will allow for an in-depth study on locomotor steps, allowing Basic students to develop strength and precision through leaps, turns, and progressions before ending class with a longer combination that incorporates a wide range of artistic concepts. Throughout this class, students will be presented with ideas and principles of movement as well as the fundamentals of rhythm, syncopation, isolation, and individual expression.

Course objectives

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

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. **Isolation:** Movement of one part of the body independently of the rest
6. **Conditioning:** A balance of flexibility, strength, and endurance.
7. **Memory & Recall:** Increased ability to learn and perform movement combinations in a limited timeframe.

8. **Artistry & Theatricality:** The ability to integrate technical skills with intuition, personal presence, and musicality – sometimes within the framework of a story or musical through line.
9. **Jazz Dance Vocabulary:** Establish a functional language for jazz dance description as well as a basic understanding of: parallel vs. turn out, pliés, tendús, flatbacks, balances, three-step-turns, jazz squares, lindies, chassés, grape vines, Charleston step, mambo step, triplets, pas de bourrée, battement in all directions, and single pirouettes.
10. **Historical & Cultural Context:** A general understanding of the roots and pioneers of jazz dance.
11. **Safety:** The ability to execute movement functionally, anatomically aligned, and with spatial awareness so as to reduce the risk for injury.
12. **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 clothing that is easy to move in, similar to workout wear or yoga attire (no jeans, please). Tie your hair back and be sure to bring a water bottle! Dancers can wear jazz shoes (preferable) or bare feet.
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 consent:** Please get consent before filming, photographing, or making physical contact with another dancer. If you would like a part of class on video in order to practice, please ask and we will arrange to record it after class with those willing/interested in participating. 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 modern dance. 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 **scent free** space. Please help us create an inclusive 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 one-hour drop-in class at eXit SPACE or theNEST. Makeups do not have to be scheduled in advance, but please check in with office staff prior to class so they know you're attending as a Basic makeup.

Recommended Reading

- *Jazz Dance: The Story of American Vernacular Dance* by Marshal Stearns & Jean Stearns
- *Jazz Dance: A History of the Roots and Branches* by Lindsay Guarino & Wendy Oliver

Welcome to eXit SPACE!