



Cultural Impact

Gain insight into the history of the genre, its development, and some of the artists' perspectives and contributions.

HISTORY

Social Dance

Dance has been a part of every culture on every continent throughout human history as a way to celebrate and connect. Social dances, in particular, are usually created by dancers of all ages to have fun and show off their unique style and abilities. Around the world, styles have evolved over time, from early line and circle dances, like folk and square dancing, to partner dances, like waltz and samba. In the U.S., social dances continued to develop inspired by rhythm and blues, soul music, rock & roll, funk, disco, and original styles of hip hop dance known as breaking or breakdancing.

Ballet

Classical ballet began as court entertainment in the Italian Renaissance in the 15th century. By 1681, ballet was performed on stage in operas about ancient mythology. King Louis XIV sponsored—and sometimes performed in—opulent ballet performances at his palace in France, where ballet was popularized and codified. Ballet traditionally is performed to classical music and features characteristics such as turnout of the legs, pointed feet, elongated body lines, and fluid movements. Elements of ballet often serve as foundational training for dancers of other genres.

Modern Dance

Modern Dance emerged in the early 20th century in the U.S. and in Germany as dancers rebelled against the rigid rules of classical ballet. Choreographers started to invent their own movements instead of using the pre-structured steps of traditional ballet. This new style offered a chance to explore and expand creativity in movement. It encouraged dancers and choreographers to use the body and space in new ways. The pioneers of modern dance broke the boundaries of traditional dance styles by using unique partnering, and improvisation to express their ideas and emotions in a new era.

Hip Hop

Breaking—also known as b-boying or breakdancing—is one element of the hip hop cultural movement that began in the 1970s in The Bronx, New York City. Hip hop was created by African Americans, Latino Americans and Caribbean Americans who empowered themselves to address the concerns of their communities, including civil rights, social justice, and political awareness. With foundational rhythms of funk and DJing, breaking as a dance form includes fast-paced footwork, drops, spins, freezes, and powermoves.



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GROWTH

In the 20th century, dance-makers from the United States and Europe began to draw upon and combine diverse dance styles to create their own unique movement vocabularies. Choreographers sought inspiration from a multitude of physical interpretations and perspectives from various parts of the world, rather than confining themselves to a single genre or rigid set of codified steps. This prompted a need for a dance framework that could be applied to all dance forms, giving rise to the identification of the five elements of dance: Body, Action, Space, Time, and Energy. Dancers and choreographers used this new framework to continue developing abstract and evocative dance vocabularies based on a variety of forms and that express their own individuality.

PERSPECTIVE

Dance is a constantly evolving art form, shaped by the innovations of choreographers who push boundaries and create new vocabularies. Victor Quijada, Artistic Director of RUBBERBAND Dance Group, is a prime example of a present-day dancer and choreographer who continues to break new ground in cross-genre dance. Born and raised in Los Angeles, Quijada's unique blend of hip hop, ballet, modern dance, and social dance influences has led to his creation of the RUBBERBAND Method. In this original dance technique, Quijada explains in an interview, "I take different movement aesthetics [and] I juxtapose them, I blend them, I abstract them. I take these aesthetics, I strip them of their disparities and then I observe what's left."

Quijada's most recent dance pieces, *Second Chances* and *Trenzado*, explore themes of belonging and homeland, as well as displacement and loss, through aspects of dance reminiscent of a multitude of styles. By combining these diverse elements in his storytelling, Quijada has created a hybrid dance form that resonates with a wide range of audiences. His work challenges traditional notions of dance, offering fresh perspectives and expanding the possibilities of cross-genre movement.



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WANT TO LEARN MORE?

[“He took his b-boy roots & created a new dance language”](#) (Video) by *CBC Arts*

[“History of Modern Dance”](#) (Article) by Ballet Austin’s Michelle Thompson & Frank Shott, Compiled and edited by Pei-San Brown, Community Education Director

[“The Historical Roots of Hip Hop”](#) (Lesson Overview) by Teachrock

[“The History of African-American social dance”](#) (Video) by Camille A. Brown

[“Victor Quijada”](#) (Biography) by *RUBBERBAND*

[“Victor Quijada of RUBBERBANDance Performs”](#) (Video) by *ideacity*