



**Date:** October 7, 2007  
**To:** DDCA Coaches, JA Judges  
**From:** Laurel McAfee, JA Commissioner  
**Subject:** Category Styles



The following style descriptions were created collaboratively July 15, 2007 by current judges wanting to provide a more unison image of Category dance styles for consistent judging criteria as well as coach and team dance education. These descriptions are accompanied by notes that are *suggestions* to choreographers to help focus their routine choreography and style.

### **JAZZ (about Panache)**

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- Technique may be modern or ballet derived (turned in vs. turned out), but with a low center of gravity, use of plie and hips, and stylized arm gestures/positions.
- Movements may include isolations of the upper body and hips, torso contraction, off center alignment, weight changes, posture/arm gestures, as well as traditional turns, leaps, jumps, extensions, and complex technical combinations.
- Movement qualities may be relaxed, fluid, with a sense of sensuality, or percussive and sharp but there is a sense of breath, plie, gravity, and use of hips.
- Jazz choreography is often interpretive of jazz music, syncopated with moments of relaxation and tension, sustained and quick, expressive of musical mood.
- Expression of music may be introspective, thrashy, bluesy, sensual, etc.,
- Character should be easily identifiable – the dancers should be able to express the music easily through their body language.

**NOTE:** Jazz routines and music used should reflect a more traditional or contemporary approach and be very different from a hip hop/rap identity.

### **KICK (about Precision)**

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- Extension of the leg from the hip or knee with one foot stationary on the floor, having both inward and outward rotation.
- Aerobic activity requiring energy, balance, carriage, and taught muscular control with very little sustained movements, breath, flexing, or release.
- Choreography including a range of creative ensemble and individual movement.
- Variety of kick options: Battement, Rond de Jambe, Tendu, Scissor, Hitch, Attitude, Arabesque, Fan, Flick, & Levels.
- Movement is rigid, bound, precise, controlled, staccato-like, isolated, and synchronized.
- Well-developed muscle control and precision timing are a desired technical factor.

**NOTE:** Kick routine construction should reflect the traditional kick genre, emphasizing kick vocabulary and its technical excellence. Formations are influential to staging kick choreography effectively. Non-kick dance movements should be kept to a minimum.

### **MODERN (about Interpretation)**

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- Technique may be defined by the team's consistent interpretation of "modern technique," giving an unusual interpretation of traditional technical skills seen in the other categories.
- Technique may have more grounding, weight variations, in and off center balance/body alignment than other styles as well as Creative use of motion, starts or stops, gesture, positioning, isolation.
- Movement qualities may be abstract, organic, unpredictable, informal, pedestrian, percussive/fluid, inward/outward rotation
- Routine structure may be less structured, heavily textured visually and musically.
- Routine structure may be multi-dimensional, presenting more than one element, emotion, story, and musical interpretation going on simultaneously.
- Interpretation may be highly interpretive, a snapshot of life – abstract or literal.
- Projection may have an inward focus or be aimed toward the audience.
- Expression may offer a wider variety and depth of emotions, concepts, objects, and images.

**NOTE:** Modern routines should incorporate movement qualities that are abstract and organic, pedestrian, informal, and possibly unpredictable in nature. Music and its interpretation may be unconventional.

### **HIP HOP (about Isolations)**

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- A non-traditional mixture of jazz, break dancing and free style moves. Hip Hop can also encompass such skills as gymnastics and karate.
- Each dancer may put there own style into a specific move. Additional head rolls, shimmies, and punctuations can be added to show flare.
- Even though moves may look less sustained, muscle control and agility are still large components of the choreography.
- Formal technique of other styles of dance will not be apparent in Hip Hop. Traditional moves are done with different technique.
- Lower center of gravity.
- Unison in timing of moves has greater value than actual placement of moves between dancers.
- Rhythm and beat are of the essence.
- Body language tends to turn inward, however posture and a strong core still need to be established.

**NOTE:** Hip Hop routines should reflect rhythmic isolations, muscular articulation and control, and the urban style of its origins.

### **LYRICAL (about Expression)**

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- Technique may be modern, jazz, or ballet derived (turned in vs. turned out), with elevated posture, formal carriage, and stylized arm gestures/positions.
- Movement skills may include balance, turns, leaps, extensions, weight changes, as well as partnering and weight sharing.
- Movement qualities may be rounded, softer, sustained, fluid and expressive with fewer sharp angles and percussive movements.
- Programs are more likely to be emotional vs. intellectual, projecting emotion or mood.
- Forms, staging and maneuvering may be linear, fluid, dramatic, and interpretive of the music, whether abstract or literal, formal or informal.
- Musical interpretation may be literal with the words or expressive of musical mood or dynamics.
- Music and movement may be fast or slow, but structure still has flow of phrasing and movement quality.
- Facial and body expression may offer a variety and depth of emotions, expressive of theme or music.

**NOTE:** Lyrical routines, whether lyrical-modern, lyrical-jazz, or ballet should reflect fluidity of movement and flow in phrasing. Tempo of choreography, fast or slow, should be expressive in content.

### **NOVELTY (about Entertainment)**

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- Program may be communicated through dancing, acting, impersonation or any other means of performance.
- Theme or character may be any variety of topics, literal or abstract, personality, story, mood, expression, or environment.
- Theme may be developed and refined by visual elements/props, costumes, staging of individuals/ensemble.
- Staging may be used to create focus, create texture, provide variety, visually stand out, and promote theme.
- Audio choice and pacing is important to reaching audience appeal and manipulating entertainment.
- Soundtrack may be music, narrative, sound effects or created live by the performers.

**NOTE:** The emphasis of Novelty performances should be more about creative movement, staging visual, musical, and theatrical entertainment, and less about structured choreography. Routine construction and choreography should be more than a skit.