

## **CLASSICAL BALLET**

### **Adult Ballet**

*Barre*-work teaches the basics of working in a turned out position, stretching and pointing the feet, proper alignment of the body and strengthening the muscles of the legs and torso for beginning dancers. Some of the same exercises done at the *barre* are also done in the center for balance, control and the use of the arms in coordination with the legs. Small jumps are done in the center. Simple walks, runs, waltz steps and *chassées* are done across the floor.

### **Ballet II**

Simple basic exercises begin at the *barre*. These exercises develop the muscles of the legs, their turn-out, extension and *plié* as well as their coordination with the torso, arms and head. In addition, elementary movement coordination is taught as well as the proper distribution of body weight over both legs and on one leg; mastery of the positions of the feet and arms are focused on intently. Concepts of *en dedans*, *en dehors*, *demi-pointe* on both legs and one leg are also introduced. Transition steps such as *glissade*, *pas de bourré*, *soutenu*, etc. are mastered at this level. Simple jumps are done in the center. Short combinations with long jumps and waltz steps, *pas de bourrées* are done across the floor.

### **Ballet III**

Exercises done at the *barre* develop greater speed, strength, flexibility and coordination of the legs, torso, arms and head. More of the *barre*-work is done on *demi-pointe* for increased strength and balance. Stretches are given to develop increased flexibility in the hips and legs for higher extensions and better turn out. The basic ballet directions are taught in the center. Simple jump combinations are taught and reversed and include simple beats. *Pirouettes* in the basic positions are mastered. Big jumps traveling across the floor focus on covering space.

### **Ballet IV**

This level develops strength and flexibility with the execution of more complicated combinations at the *barre* and in the center. Students must be able to change and use different dynamics of movement and attack in the legs and feet. *Barre*-work involves quick changes of direction, quick weight changes from one leg to the other and more sustained *adagios*. Balances in different positions are important additions to the end of each combination. Center work includes *adagios* with rises on *demi-pointe*, *promenades* and slow controlled *pirouettes*. *Petit allegro* incorporates beats and directional changes using *épaulement*. *Grand allegro* requires students to be able to execute *grand jeté en tournant*, *saut de chat*, *saut de basque* and other expansive jumps that challenge their strength and stamina and allow them to enjoy moving through space.

### **Ballet V**

This advanced intermediate level is for students who are ready to experience the full range of exercises that require larger, more expansive movements that test their strength and stability. Higher extensions, multiple *pirouettes*, *petit allegro* with *batterie*, *grand allegro* and quick transfer of weight and the power of the legs and body are emphasized. *Pointe* work is introduced for women at the end of class on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

### **Ballet VI**

This advanced level develops a refinement of the work of the feet, legs, arms and head at the *barre*. Exercises that build higher extensions and increased turn out are given with varying

rhythms. *Adagios* are done at a slow tempo for control and strength; in contrast, very fast exercises develop speed and precision. More stretching develops greater suppleness and ease of movement. Complicated small jumps with beats, multiple turns, change of direction and coordination of the feet, arms and head are emphasized in the center work. Longer *adagios* demand high extensions, big *pirouettes*, balance and musicality. Long grand *allegro* combinations with big jumps and turns build strength, stamina and power for the men. Women do *pointe* work in the center and traveling in big combinations across the floor. At this level, artistry and musicality are emphasized.

### **Pointe** (beg.)

Exercises at the *barre* build strength, articulation and flexibility in the feet and legs while developing the ability to control the balance on *pointe*. Center work follows with short adagio work for control and balance. Small jumps in the center prepare for traveling combinations across the floor.

### **Pointe** (int.)

More complex exercises at the *barre* build increased strength, articulation and flexibility in the feet, legs, and torso. Longer *adagio* work at the *barre* and in the center develop extensions, control, balance, and turns. Small jumps with beats and *pointe* work in the center are followed by longer traveling combinations that develop expressiveness and musicality while building greater technical skills.

### **Men's Ballet** (int./advanced level-ballet V and VI)

This class builds strength, stamina, and technical skills needed today by male dancers. *Barre*-work focuses on alignment, balance, strength and flexibility. Center combinations build to multiple grand pirouettes, increased elevation and jumps with *batterie*. Combinations across the floor emphasize *grand allegro* and the ability to cover space.

### **Partnering**

This class has been designed to challenge and expand the dancers' perception of partnering possibilities. Along with dynamic and intricate movement phrases, the dancers practice rolling, falling, being upside down, following a physical point of contact, and supporting and giving weight to each other. This class is based on the communication between two or more moving bodies that are in physical contact, and their combined relationship to the physical laws that govern their motion - gravity, momentum, inertia, function, etc.

## **HORTON TECHNIQUE**

### **Horton I**

This beginning level for advanced beginners lays the groundwork for all that follows in the advanced levels. The basic warm up is taught: flat backs, primitive squat, descent and ascent, lateral stretches, release swings, leg swings and deep lunges. The shapes that will be used throughout the training in Horton technique are emphasized: the T positions, stag position, cross lunge and coccyx balance. The Horton technique was designed with studies to stretch and strengthen different areas of the body. Many of the beginning level studies which are taught focus on the Achilles tendon, the abdominal muscles, and movements that lengthen the spine and the hamstring muscles. Simple combinations of movements that include turns and jumps are taught to introduce musicality and dynamics to the beginning dancer's

vocabulary. Performance qualities are emphasized at the very beginning of the dancer's training.

### **Horton II**

This level uses the basic Horton warm-up with more variations. Many of the positions and shapes developed earlier are used in turns, jumps and in combinations of movement. More demanding studies are added which require more stretch and strength in the quadriceps and abdominal muscles. Hinges at the *barre* and falls are included in this level. The movements across the floor are longer and require more concentration and focus from the dancers. The introduction of canons and rhythmical patterns are stressed as well as the development of dynamics and projection.

### **Horton III**

The warm-up in this level includes exercises to stretch and strengthen the legs, hips and spine. The center floor-work includes longer studies like the Figure 4 and Percussive Stroke Studies which require the dancers to remember long sequences of movements, counts and dynamics. The combinations of movements across the floor are more complicated musically and technically and challenge the dancers to learn movement quickly. The combinations include material just introduced as well as vocabulary learned in the other levels. The performance aspects of dance are emphasized.

### **Horton IV**

The warm-up now includes a long study, Dimensional Tonus, which incorporates many aspects of the warm-up into a complicated and demanding dance phrase. The center and floor work use hinges and falls with more frequency and the combinations of movements are long, sophisticated movement phrases that require strength, speed and flexibility. Individualized coaching on performance and technique is given at this advanced/professional level.

## **GRAHAM-BASED MODERN TECHNIQUE**

### **Modern I**

This introductory class in Graham-based Modern technique teaches the basic vocabulary rooted in the contraction and release for advanced beginners. This technique divides the class into 3 equal segments: floor-work, standing work in the center and combinations that travel across the floor. The floor-work develops a strong expressive torso as the source of movement with simple breathing exercises that build to contraction and release exercises in various positions. The spiral position of the back leads into turns around the back in 4th position, adding the legs with the back leg extension series. Standing exercises in the center emphasize the use of the leg and the coordination of the legs, arms and torso with the contraction and release and oppositional spiral of the torso in relation to the legs. Short combinations in the center and across the floor focus on covering space and shifting weight.

**Modern II** - The floor-work becomes more complex with lengthier exercises that emphasize the drama of the contraction and release and spiral of the back. The use of the legs and arms from the back is emphasized as an extension of the torso, neck and head. In 4th position, a coiling of the body's weight into the center in preparation for standing is developed. Standing work in the center develops the ability to shift the weight and work off center. More

complicated traveling combinations incorporate the contraction and release, spiral, jumps and moving fully with weight, power, and dynamic changes.

**Modern III** - This level continues to build strength with an awareness of the torso as the center and initiator of all movement. Spiral, contraction and release exercises become longer and more complex, using the legs more often. Opposition and weight shifts are emphasized, building a stronger movement vocabulary, increased dynamic range and more control. The weight of the body is further explored in primary falling combinations from sitting positions and the knees. Standing work in the center develops more stamina, balance, control, flexibility and expanded sense of movement through extended combinations with contraction and release, leg extensions, *plié* series and shifts of weight. The centering of the body is heightened with falls to the floor from standing positions off center and pitch turns. Elevation in jumps is emphasized. Longer traveling combinations often use difficult rhythms and contracting spirals along with more complicated movement phrases that call for dramatic expressiveness, use of weight and musicality.

**Modern IV** - Technical skill are honed at this advanced professional level. Breathing, a gathering and releasing of tension is heightened, increasing versatility in the work. Phrases of movement are emphasized throughout the floor--work. More complicated, longer combinations in the center build control and balance while working on and off center. Leg extensions are higher and the full integration of the legs, arms and head with the torso as the center and the catalyst of all movement is achieved. The body now moves as a whole, not as individual parts. There is no longer a separation of the floor, standing and traveling work, but all are combined in lengthy combinations as an expressive, dramatic, and technically advanced vocabulary. Performance skills are coached, particularly the dramatic expression of the individual.

## **IAZZ**

### **jazz I**

This class for beginners combines the excitement of moving in several styles with developing basic technical skills. Warm-up exercises stretch and tone the body while developing proper alignment and body awareness. Short combinations in diverse styles (lyric, blues, hip hop, and Broadway) focus on musicality and the ability to move through space.

### **jazz II**

This class for advanced beginners begins with a standing warm-up that develops the body's proper alignment, flexibility and control. Exercises follow that isolate the different parts of the body and develop increasingly complex coordination of the arms, head and legs. Longer combinations that emphasize expressiveness in lyrical and dynamic Broadway styles are given in the center and across the floor.

### **jazz III**

This intermediate/advanced level begins with a fast-paced standing warm-up that emphasizes proper placement, increased flexibility and control. Isolation exercises and short combinations focusing on extensions and turns are done in the center. Long sections of jazz choreography in contrasting styles are given in the center and across the floor. Students are coached on performance skills (focus, dynamic contrast, musicality, etc.).

## **Tap**

An approach to Tap dance that incorporates four instructional components. First, students learn a series of exercises at the *barre* to strengthen the arches and heels of the feet. Second, a series of rhythm sequences are done that use syncopation, double and triple timing, hand claps, finger snaps and long breaks. Third, students begin to learn simple choreography based on exercises learned at the *barre*. Accompanied by music, students are encouraged to use all parts of their bodies and to develop more complex technical skills while tapping. Last, through a series of progressions, students learn to use the entire space of the room. Exercises are combined into short combinations traveling forwards, backwards, and side to side across the floor.

## **DUNHAM TECHNIQUE**

### **Dunham I**

The first exercises at the *barre* are given to build in beginning dancers, strength, stamina and accurate placement, focusing first on the back, followed by the legs, arms and feet. Subsequent exercises stretch the back and legs, expanding and lengthening the body as much as possible. Combinations in the center develop balance and control. Movement progressions are done across the floor at the end of the class. Live drumming accompanies this Afro-Caribbean technique class.

### **Dunham II**

*Barre-work* is more complex and intense, building increased strength and stamina, particularly in the back and legs for advanced beginners. Exercises done at the *barre* and in the center emphasize balance, control and flexibility of the body. Longer combinations are done throughout the class and particularly with progressions across the floor, which include more jumps and turns. Live drumming accompanies this Afro-Caribbean technique class.

## **West African Dance**

This class is a high-spirited, high-powered rhythmic dance experience and is for anyone who loves to dance. The class brings together body, mind and spirit in an energetic union of the music, dance and oral tradition of the people of West Africa. Participants learn regional songs and dances of welcome and praise such as; Lamban (Dance of Celebration), Mandjani (Challenge Dance), and Wolo Sodon Jon Don (Dance of Becoming Free). Each dance is accompanied by live drumming to provide participants with an understanding of the relationship between the dancer and musician and the common language they must speak in order to execute an African dance style.

## **BARRE A TERRE**

### **Barre a Terre - Int.** (Ballet Levels III and IV)

A supplemental class for intermediate students, this class leads students to explore the different muscles that enable the body to work properly while standing. Work on placement and alignment is done while lying on the floor, using both turned out and parallel positions. Instruction is given on the proper use of energy as a means to lengthen muscles and freeing the body from improper tension. The last half-hour class is a standing *barre* that requires students to apply their experiences from the floor-work.

### **Barre a Terre** - Adv. (Ballet Levels V, VI, and Men's)

A supplemental class for more advanced students, this level develops in the student a balance of strength, flexibility and endurance. Injury prevention and the maintenance of a healthy body are focused on intently. Specific Pilates based exercises are taught that accelerate the training process. Work in turned-out positions and the elongation of muscles through proper use of breath and energy are some of the basic components of this class. The last half-hour of class is a standing *barre* that requires the students to apply their experiences from the floor-work. Depending on the class size, additional work may involve specific coaching based on each dancer's needs and challenges.

### **Body Conditioning**

Required of beginning students, this class is based on the Pilates exercise method of mind/body control. The emphasis is on alignment, placement, posture and injury prevention. The class is conducted without music, utilizing rhythmical repetitions and flowing movements. Concentration on body awareness, anatomy, correct body usage and breath control result in a strong, toned and fully functioning body.

*Fall and Spring: 3 X per week = 3 credits*

### **Yoga I**

This class for beginners provides an understanding of basic breathing exercises and synchronized breath with movement. It increases the body's overall flexibility and strength through a series of seated kneeling, lying and standing exercises that relate the Yoga basics with fundamentals of dance to develop a sense of balance, control, symmetry and line. It develops the student's ability to unlock spinal energy blocks and open the central nervous system through arching, curling, lateral, twisting, and circular movements of the spine. It prepares the musculature and ligament attachments for increased flexibility and strength particularly in the hips, shoulders, and chest. Most importantly, it provides an opportunity for each student to examine and maximize his or her own unique potential as a creative and dancer in life.

### **Yoga II**

This class takes the basic movements taught in Yoga I and develops them into a more fluid series that further increases the strength and flexibility already achieved in the body. It develops a sense of creativity and freedom in the body that further relates this particular system of Yoga to dance in all of its aspects. It endorses each student's responsibility to and for him/himself as artist, performer, and person.

### **Repertory Workshops**

Repertory workshops are given throughout the year by a diverse group of AAADC faculty members and guest artists to offer performance opportunities to intermediate and advanced students. The choreographers create original works and mount existing works on intermediate and advanced dancers who are chosen by audition. Students rehearse for 4-8 weeks and perform the works in the School's studio in August, January and March.

### **Artist-in-Residence Workshops**

Artist-in-Residence (AIR) Workshops bring renowned dance artists from the profession to share their various areas of expertise with intermediate/advanced students of The Ailey School. They represent a range of aesthetics from masters like Alvin Ailey, Donald McKayle, and Benjamin Harkarvy to more emerging artist like Ron Brown, Donald Byrd and Lila York. These workshops can offer supplementary technique training (Harkarvy), creative work (Creach and Koester) and the learning and performance of original and classical dance repertory. AIR Workshops culminate in the School's Spring Gala held in a New York City theater.

### **WORLD DANCE HISTORY**

People dance and use dance to fulfill many needs, goals and responsibilities. This course surveys world dance forms in terms of the many ways dance functions as an expression of culture and traces dance from its role in folk and religious traditions to its emergence as a theater art. Students study the impulse for dance in several cultures, looking to the practices which gave rise to particular dance forms. The formal properties and evolution of various dance forms are explored. The course also considers certain "art" dances made by American choreographers inspired by non-Western dance forms.

### **MUSIC FOR DANCERS**

#### **Music I - Introduction to Concepts of Western Music**

This course gives an overview of the important elements of music for dancers through an analysis of the four components of music: rhythm, melody, harmony, and text. By examining examples from the Baroque through the Romantic period in Europe and the United States through listening/audio/video examples, a midterm and a final individual study project, students learn to listen with new ideas about music, from the dancer's perspective.

#### **Music II - Introduction to African-American Music**

This course studies music from the African-American tradition, revealing how elements of this body of music have influenced other music of the world, built a multi-billion worldwide industry and affected most music, dance, and theater in America today. In addition to an historic overview, the class delves into the technical aspects of music in the African-American tradition, studying rhythm, melody, harmony and form. Innovations, various styles of music and the sociological aspects of this tradition from the past to the present will also be discussed.

### **ANATOMY AND KINESIOLOGY I AND II**

The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with the musculoskeletal structures most directly involved in the performance of dance so that they can identify the bones, joints and muscles that lie under the skin anywhere in the body. In addition, students will learn how the skeletal muscles work to produce joint movement, how those muscles can be conditioned and what patterns of muscle action are most effective for producing the basic movements of ballet and contemporary dance techniques.

### **PERFORMANCE AND ART**

This acting course for dancers will work in developing original scenes based on poetry, sculpture, paintings and scene study. Emphasis on work with physical actions and creating

a physical and psychological score to illuminate actor-created work. Focus on imagination, writing and performance skills.

### **IMPROVISATION**

This introductory course is structured to free expression, investigate form and heighten concentration. Structured dance improvisational problems are given to lead the student to simultaneously invent and perform movement without pre-planning. Each class includes a brief warm-up followed by many different and changing forms – group movement, solos, trios and contact improvisation which begin with duets. Emphasis is placed on the development in each student of a heightened sensitivity and conscientiousness about the creative impulse. Personal movement style and habits and the role of improvisation in both performance and the creative process are thoroughly explored.

### **DANCE COMPOSITION I**

This course capitalizes on the skills garnered in improvisation class by carefully leading students in the process of composing short studies based on a variety of abstract themes. Very specific limitations provide the framework of the initial studies and students are encouraged to acknowledge personal impulse and style while exploring within this base. Later, emphasis is placed on the growth of content and context out of these abstract explorations and studies become more ambitious. Supportive group feedback is central to the development of every student's work. Students present both a group and solo work as final projects at the end of the semester. *Prerequisite(s):* Improvisation.

### **DANCE COMPOSITION II**

This course guides students into exploring more complex and personal motivations for moving. Students are expected to be independent, responsible and self-motivated in this context. There is freedom to arrange independent projects. Emphasis is placed on giving and receiving constructive well-informed criticism. Self-analysis and the ability to articulate well are important skills fostered in this class. All of the work is expected to be in line with specific personal goals that the student and instructor establish together early in the term. Group projects are encouraged in the second half of the term. *Prerequisite(s):* Improvisation, Composition I.

### **DANCE COMPOSITION III**

This course focuses on the evolution of a genre or choreographer in historical context. *Prerequisite(s):* Improvisation, Composition I and II

### **DANCE COMPOSITION IV**

This course is the culmination of the creative work required of all B.F.A. students. Students create longer and more complete works. They are asked to use larger groups of dancers, more sophisticated concepts and more counterpoint fugue. *Prerequisite(s):* Improvisation, Composition I, II and III

### **DANCE COMPOSITION V**

The course focuses on the evolution of a genre or choreographer in historical context. *Prerequisite(s):* Improvisation, Composition I, II, III and IV

### **SENIOR SEMINAR**

This course is designed to assist seniors in preparing for success in the professional dance world. The course will require each student to keep a journal, research dance companies and choreographers, attend performances, participate in discussions of lectures by guest artists, and write a final paper as well as a final oral project.

### **SENIOR PROJECT IN PERFORMANCE**

The senior project in performance offers invaluable practical experience for students as performers, speakers/lecturers and, in some cases, choreographers. The first term is spent working with renowned artists-in-residence from the professional dance field. They represent a range of aesthetics from masters like Alvin Ailey, Jose Limón or Paul Taylor to emerging artists like Ronald K. Brown, Lila York and Donald Byrd. These workshops can offer supplementary technique training (Limón) or creative work (Creach and Koester) that complement the rehearsal of dance repertory. Under the guidance and supervision of The Ailey School faculty, students perform at locations in the metropolitan area during the winter. In the spring, the project culminates with intensive rehearsals and coaching that prepare the students to be showcased in their B.F.A. spring Concert in a New York City theater. *Prerequisite(s)*: Open to seniors at the advanced level in all three major techniques and by approval from the B.F.A. director, co-director and selected faculty members.

### **SENIOR PROJECT IN CHOREOGRAPHY**

This course sequence is taken under the mentorship of an Ailey School faculty member by those students selected as gifted and motivated choreographers. Three solo, duet and/or group works, one of which must be a group work, are completed for a formal studio showing at the end of the fall term. Three or more works, only one of which can be a solo work, must be completed for a shared formal concert at the end of the spring term. *Prerequisite(s)*: Dance Composition II, Independent Study in Dance Composition and the approval of a written proposal of the senior project submitted to the B.F.A. director, co-director, and Ailey School faculty at the end of the junior year.