

Queensland Ballet

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR LI CUNXIN AO

Dance Moves Resource Book

Ballet Terminology

Term	Pronunciation	Defintion
Assemblè	<i>a-sahm-BLAY</i>	Assembled or joined together. A step in which the working foot slides along the ground before being swept into the air. As the foot goes into the air the dancer pushes off the floor with the supporting leg, extending the toes. Both feet land on the ground simultaneously in the fifth position.
Balancè	<i>ba-lahn-SAY</i>	Rocking step. An alternation of balance, shifting the weight from foot to foot.
Ballonné, pas	<i>pah ba-law-NAY</i>	Ball-like of bouncing step. The dancer springs into the air extending one leg to the front, side or back and lands with the extended leg either sur le cou-de-pied or retirè.
Ballottè	<i>ba-law-TAY</i>	Tossed. The step consists of coupè dessus performed in a series with a rocking, swinging movement. The direction of the body is effacè with the body inclining backward or forward with each change of weight.
Battement	<i>Bat-MAHN</i>	Beating. A beating action of the extended or bent leg.
Battement en cloche, grand	<i>grahn bat-MAHN ahn klawsh</i>	Large battement like a bell. Continuous grands battements executed from the fourth position front or back en l'air to the fourth position back or front en'lair, passing through first position.
Battement, grand	<i>grahn bat-MAHN</i>	Large battement. An exercise in which the working leg is raised from the hip into the air and brought down again. the accent being on the downward movement, both knees straight.
Châinès	<i>she-NAY</i>	Chains. A series of rapid turns on the points or demi-points dont in a straight line or circle.
Chassè	<i>sha-SAY</i>	Chased. A step in which one foot literally chases the other foot out of its position; done in a series.
Cloche, en	<i>ahn-klawsh</i>	Like a bell. Refers to grands battements executed continuously devant and derrière through the first position.
Couru	<i>koo-REW</i>	Running. As, for example in pas de bourrée couru.
Demi-plie	<i>duh-MEE-plee-AY</i>	Half-bend of the knees. All steps of elevation begin and end with a demi-pliè.
Dèveloppè	<i>dayv-law-PAY</i>	The working leg is drawn up to the knee of the supporting leg and slowly extended to an open position en l'air and held there with perfect control. Hips are kept level and square to the direction the dancers is facing.
Échappè	<i>ay-sha-PAY</i>	Escaping or slipping movement. Level opening of both feet from a closed to an open position.
Fondu	<i>fawn-DEW</i>	Sinking down. Lowering of the body made by bending the knee of the supporting leg.
Fouettè	<i>fweh-TAY</i>	Whipped. The movement may be a short whipped movement of the raised foot as it passes rapidly in front of or behind the supporting foot, or the sharp whipping around of the body from one direction to another.
Glissade	<i>glee-SARD</i>	Glide. Travelling step executed by gliding the working foot from fifth position in the required direction, the other foot closing to it.

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Jeté, grand	<i>grahn zhuh-TAV</i>	Large jeté. Legs are thrown to 90 degrees with a corresponding high jump. Done forward to attitude croisée or effacée and with all arabesques. It may also be done backwards with the leg raised either croisé or effacé devant.
Pas de bourrée	<i>pah duh boo-RAY</i>	Bourrée step, Pas de bourrée is done dessous, dessus, devant, derrière, en avant, en arrière and en tournant, en dedans and en dehors, on the point or demi-pointe.
Penché	<i>pahn-SHAY</i>	Leaning, inclining.
Piqué	<i>pee-KAY</i>	Pricked. Executed by stepping directly on the point or demi-pointe of the working foot in any desired direction with the other foot raised in the air.
Pirouette	<i>peer-WET</i>	Whirl or spin. A complete turn of the body on one foot, on point or demi-pointe. Performed en dedans, turning inward toward the supporting leg, or en dehors, turning outward in the direction of the raised leg.
Plié	<i>plee-AY</i>	Bent, bending. A bending of the knee or knees.
Port de bras	<i>pawr duh brah</i>	Carriage of the arms. A movement/s made by passing the arm/s through various positions, or a group of exercises designed to make the arms move gracefully and harmoniously.
Relevé	<i>ruhl-VAT</i>	Raised. A raising of the body on the point/s or demi-pointe/s.
Retiré	<i>ruh-tee-RAY</i>	Withdrawn. A position in which the thigh is raised to the second position en l'air with the knee bent so that the pointed toe rests in front of, behind or to the side of the supporting knee.
Ront de jambe	<i>rawn duh zhahnb</i>	A circular movement of the leg. Used as an exercise at the bar, in the centre and in the adage, or as a step done en l'air. All are done clockwise (en dehors) and counterclockwise (en dedans).
Rond de jambe à terre	<i>rawn duh zhahnb tehr</i>	Rond de jambe on the ground. An exercise at the bar or in the centre in which one leg is made to describe a series of circular movements on the ground. Both legs must be kept perfectly straight and all movement must come from the hip, along with the arching and relaxing of the instep. The toe of the working foot does not rise off the ground and does not pass beyond the fourth position front or the fourth position back.
Rond de jambe en l'air	<i>rawn duh zhahnb ahn lehr</i>	Rond de jambe in the air. May be done at the bar and in centre practice and may be single, or double, en dehors or en dedans. The toe of the working foot describes an oval, the extreme ends of which are the second position en l'air and the supporting leg. The thigh must be kept motionless and the hips well turned out, the whole movement being made by the leg below the knee. The thigh should be held horizontal so that the pointed toe of the working foot passes at (approximately) the height of the supporting knee.

Source: American Ballet Theatre; Ballet Dictionary

Positions of the feet



First position



Second position



Third position



Fourth position



Fifth position



Sixth position



Classical position

Positions of the arms



First position



Second position



Third position



Fourth position



Fifth position