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## BREAKDOWN OF SET EXERCISES PRE MODERN JAZZ

### 1. MARCHES

#### Stance

Begin standing upstage left corner, facing downstage right. Students in a line behind one another, in height order from shortest to tallest. Feet are together with body and head erect, and arms straight at sides. To ensure correct posture, shoulders should be held down and back using the latissimus dorsi and trapezius muscles. Abdominals and gluteal muscles should be engaged and knees pulled up using the quadriceps.

#### Marches

To begin, raise the right leg, bending the knee, keeping the thigh parallel (not turned out) and ensuring the right foot is pointed and touching the left knee. Note the toes of the right foot, not the ankle should be level with the left knee, to ensure the thigh is fully lifted and parallel to ground (thigh makes a table top.) This position requires the use of, and therefore strengthens the following:

Hip flexors (i.e. iliopsoas and quadriceps) to lift and hold the thigh at this height

Hamstrings to flex the knee and hold the lower leg in the correct position

Adductors (i.e. Adductor group and gracilis) to stabilize the thigh in parallel

Plantar flexors (i.e. Gastrocnemius, soleus, peroneus longus) to point the foot and toes.

From this table top position of the right leg, step right foot forward (travelling DSR) lightly on to a flat foot with right knee straight, using the quadriceps muscles to extend the leg. Transfer the weight and sharply lift the left leg to the table-top position with a pointed left foot touching the right knee. Getting into this position requires accuracy in the strength of contraction of the hip flexors and hamstrings, to quickly get the thigh and foot in the correct position. For example, over-contracting the hip flexors will result in the thigh coming too high and the foot going past the supporting knee, therefore missing the position before stepping forward.

During the step into position, the right arm swings forward and left arm swings back to a natural height, ensuring it is not too high, eg. Not above 90 degrees. Both arms are to remain straight with fingers together. Repeat with other foot and arms, doing 12 marches in total. Head is turned looking into centre for duration of marches.

It is important when stepping forward, that the foot does not flex early in anticipation of stepping onto the ground. The step should go through the foot leading with the toes first in order to demonstrate correct technique and controlled use of the muscles in the foot, gastrocnemius and soleus.

On count 13 (after 12 marches), jump feet together with knees bent (to avoid injury to the tibia, back and knee and hip joints), upper body in contraction over thighs (stretching the spine and back muscles) and hands clapped in front of chest. Count 15 is a free pose appropriate to the age and ability of the student.

### 2. SKIPS

#### Stance

Begin standing upstage left corner, facing downstage right. Students in a line behind one another, in height order from shortest to tallest. Feet are together with body and head erect, and hands on hips with fingers together and wrists straight. To ensure correct posture, shoulders should be held down and back using the latissimus dorsi and trapezius muscles. Abdominals and gluteal muscles should be engaged and knees pulled up using the quadriceps.

#### Intro

All students together – clap (in front of chest) and say in loud clear voice “5, 6, 7, 8.” Hands are placed on hips after claps.

### Skips

To begin skips, pick up right foot (pointed) to left knee, ensuring the right thigh is parallel and at table-top position, as described in Marches exercise. Simultaneously, hop on the left leg using a powerful pushing force from the quadriceps, gluteals and gastrocnemius, which aims to straighten the left knee and point the left foot at the height of the hop, as well as propel the body forward. It is also important to keep the right leg in place whilst hopping. Strongly lifting the right leg up into position will help with achieving elevation.

Land the hop on the left leg closely followed by the right foot landing beside the left foot. Upon landing, the knees must bend to avoid injury to the tibia, back, and knee and hip joints, as well as provide a position from which to once again hop. The quadriceps, hamstring and gluteals absorb the forces from landing and eccentrically contract to brake and slow the rate of descent.

Repeat to the other side by transferring all of the weight onto the right foot, and bringing left foot to right knee with thigh lifted and parallel in table top position as described before. Using the same technique as described earlier, hop on right leg moving forward, ensuring the left foot stays touching the right knee, and land on the right leg followed by the left. Repeat skips, doing 16 in total.

Throughout the exercise, the hands remain on the hips, in the position described in the Stance, and head looks to centre. It is important that the upper body remains relatively steady, and doesn't become too involved in trying to increase elevation. To achieve this, the rectus abdominis, external oblique, erector spinae and latissimus dorsi should be held tightly to avoid movement forward, backward and side-to-side. The force required to achieve elevation should predominately come from the quadriceps, with further help from gluteals, gastrocnemius and soleus. As the momentum increases with the number of skips, it becomes less effort on the quadriceps to jump upward and forward at the same time.

This exercise is designed to show and improve coordination, balance and strength in the legs.

### **3. KNEE BOPS**

The purpose of this exercise is to build the ability for students to perform complex movements that involve using the whole body. It also teaches co-ordination and fast change of direction as well as the feeling of a contraction.

#### Stance & Intro

Start centre back with feet together and body held firm with correct posture. Hands on hips as described in previous exercise. Intro claps as in Skips exercise.

#### Knee-Bops

Bend both knees and lift right foot (pointed), so that it is placed next to the left knee, with both legs parallel. Place hands on thighs just above knees, with fingers facing in, and contract the upper body over the knees so that it is close to the lifted leg. The direction of the body is facing slightly to downstage left (the corner opposite to the lifted leg, i.e. croise.)

Step right foot forward bringing the body upright and knees straight.

Repeat using the opposite sides, bringing the left foot directly up to the right knee.

It is important to see the change in body angle with each step taken.

8 knee bops in 1/2 time, i.e. lift right foot to left knee and contract body over on count 1. Step forward straightening the body and knees on count 2.

The muscles that are primarily used include the following:

Abdominals and erector spinae muscles used in the body contraction and extension.

Iliopsoas and quadriceps group to lift the knee.

Hamstrings to bend the knee lifting the foot.

Gluteal muscles and quadriceps in the extension of the leg and step.

Gluteal muscles (particularly gluteus medius and minimus) for balance standing on one leg and prevent sitting into the supporting hip (i.e. hip swings out to side).

#### **4. HIP EXERCISE**

##### Stance

Begin standing feet together with body and head erect, and hands on hips with fingers together and wrists straight. To ensure correct posture, shoulders should be held down and back using the latissimus dorsi and trapezius muscles. Abdominals and gluteal muscles should be engaged and knees pulled up using the quadriceps.

##### Intro

All students clap as per previous exercises.

##### Hips

Step right foot to second keeping both feet parallel. Male: Hands remain on the waist with back held firmly. Female: Extend arms out to the sides at shoulder height, with wrists flexed and palms facing side walls, (Count 1) Count 1 also includes first hip movement to right, with slight bend of the knees allowing the ability to sit into the right hip, and a contraction of the right side abdominals (rectus abdominis and obliques) to side bend the torso to the right. This position stretches the left external oblique and left erector spinae group. The movement is initiated by the slight change in weight and bend of the torso therefore also strengthening the abdominals on the right side.

Head tilts to right using the right sternocleidomastoid, increasing the level of coordination and stretching the left sternocleidomastoid. It is important that the latissimus dorsi, trapezius and deltoids are held strongly, holding the arm position throughout the exercise to keep the scapulae flat at the back and close together and arms arm at shoulder height. This ensures correct posture and positioning and keeps the arms and shoulders relatively still and in a straight line though-out the exercise, despite movement below.

Repeat hip movement and head to left, using and strengthening the rectus abdominis on the left and left external oblique, and stretching the right side abdominals and sternocleidomastoid. Repeat all doing 7 hips in total. Small jump to bring both feet together, and clap in front of chest on count 8.

Male and female: Stepping the right foot out to second with feet parallel on count 1, repeat hip and head movements as described above (counts 1-7). Arms on first hip movement to right, extend above the head, with the right arm open slightly (about 90°) keeping the elbow straight, and left arm bent at the elbow so that the left hand is directly above the head. With hip movement to the left, arms change to opposite. Small jump to bring both feet together, and clap in front of chest on count 8.

In addition to strengthening the abdominals, this exercise also helps to warm up and limber the hip joint and the gluteal group and the adductor group.

It is important to ensure that throughout this exercise, the back does not over-extend, as this position displays incorrect posture and along with the hip movements, can cause strain on the erector spinae muscles and the intervertebral joints in the lumbar region.

#### **5. DANCE STEPS**

The purpose of this exercise is to build the ability for students to perform complex movements in a sequence that involve using the whole body. It also teaches co-ordination and fast change of direction as well as giving them a foundation for more challenging steps in higher grades.

## JUNIOR MODERN JAZZ

### 1. WARM UP

The purpose of this warm up is to teach the student the importance of both cardiovascular and stretching components of a warm up.

#### Stance & Intro

Start in centre of room with feet together, arms straight down at sides and body held firm with upright posture as described in previous grade. On count 8 of intro clap hands together in front of chest and naturally bend the knees in preparation for the first jump.

#### Jumps

16 jumps on the spot with feet together in parallel and arms swinging naturally backward with one jump and forward back to clap position (without making sound) on next jump. This exercise is effective in getting the blood flowing through the legs, warming them up before stretching. The following muscles are used for jumping:

Gluteus maximus and hamstrings perform the action of hip extension at the beginning phase of take off.

The quadriceps extend the knee, acting almost simultaneously to the hip extensors. These 2 groups of muscles provide the power and driving force for the jump.

Gastrocnemius and soleus muscles plantar flex the foot, providing propulsive forces in the final stage of take off.

The arm movement also helps with elevation in this exercise therefore the deltoids in the shoulder, pectoralis major and latissimus dorsi are active.

When elevated, the gluteals, quadriceps, adductors and plantar flexors along with erector spinae, trapezius and abdominal muscles remain engaged in order to hold the body erect and strong in the air.

Upon landing, the same muscles are used as in the take off phase, but in the reverse order. The abdominals, erector spinae and trapezius remain engaged keeping the torso from collapsing.

Repeat jumps with change in direction i.e. 4 facing right, 4 facing back, 4 facing left and 4 facing front. The external oblique turns the torso guiding the change in direction.

#### Runs on spot

Runs on the spot helps to warm the entire body by getting the blood flowing and moving faster around the body.

The quadriceps, hamstring, gastrocnemius and soleus are the prime movers for the legs, while the deltoids, latissimus dorsi and biceps are the main muscles acting upon the arms.

#### Hips

2 hip movements to each side following by 1 each side with arms above the head. Breakdown of the exercise and movement described in Pre Modern Jazz, Hip Exercise.

#### Roll Down in Parallel First

Beginning with head nod, roll upper body down working through each vertebrae until the palms of the hands are on the floor. This stretches primarily the hamstrings but also the back muscles, gluteus maximus, gastrocnemius and Achilles tendon. Rectus abdominis and obliques are the primary muscles used in controlling the roll down. Back of the neck and shoulders should be relaxed in the upside down position and weight forward over the knees and toes. Muscles around the ankle joint (tibialis anterior, soleus, peroneus longus) are used to moderate balance in this position. The range of movement in this position will largely depend on the degree of flexibility in the hamstrings.

4 bounces in a crouch position following by straightening of the legs back to previous stretch. The bounces relax the muscles of the back of the leg and get blood flow to the area, helping to increase the range of flexibility in the stretch.

Roll back up to the beginning position once again using the abdominals to roll through each vertebrae in order to stretch all parts of the back and help create flexibility in the spine.

### 2. SKIPS

### Stance

Begin standing upstage left corner, facing downstage right. Each child in a line behind one another, in height order from shortest to tallest. Feet are together with body and head erect, and arms at sides. To ensure correct posture, shoulders should be held down and back using the latissimus dorsi and trapezius muscles. Abdominals and gluteal muscles should be held tight and knees pulled up using the quadriceps.

### Skips

Theory and technique for skips is as described in Pre Modern Jazz Skips exercise.

a)

Arms swing forward and back in opposing directions according to the leg used. The right arm swings forward and the left arm back, on the first skip stepping with the right leg and lifting the left.

This use of arms increases the difficulty of the step from the previous grade, and demonstrating and helping to improve coordination.

b)

8 skips travelling downstage right with swinging arms as described in section a) of the exercise.

8 skips on the spot with change of direction to each corner: 2 skips each facing upstage right, upstage left, downstage left and downstage right.

Arms extend sideward at shoulder height with palms facing up on the first skip on right leg. Hands clap high above the head on second count with the left leg skip. Repeat arm movement for all skips with change of direction. This particular arm movement uses and strengthens the deltoids, latissimus dorsi, upper pectoralis major, trapezius, triceps and biceps, and increases the need for the torso (particularly the rectus abdominis) to stabilize the body.

This exercise also includes change of direction, which increases the difficulty of the exercise and requires the student to learn direction control and focus.

c)

4 skips with the right leg first, with use of arms as described in section b) for change of direction skips.

Small spring landing with feet apart. It is important that both knees are bent to prevent injuries to the tibia, ankle joint and lumbar back, as well as to prepare for the next step. Hop from both feet onto the right foot, fully bending the left knee (using the hamstring group) without flexing at the hip joint, allowing the left foot to be near the buttocks. Repeat both counts on opposite foot (spring to both feet and hop onto left foot.)

This small combination teaches coordination and quick change of weight.

## **2. KNEE BOPS**

The purpose of this exercise is to build the ability for students to perform complex movements that involve using the whole body. It also teaches co-ordination and fast change of direction as well as the feeling of a contraction.

### Stance

Start centre back with feet together and body held firm with correct posture. Arms at sides.

### Knee-Bops

Knee bops using technique described in Pre Modern Jazz, Knee Bops exercise. In this grade however, the knee bops are in time with the music therefore the student must demonstrate their increased ability to accurately execute the step, to keep balance as well as musicality.

a)

4 knee bops in time with music (i.e. lift knee and contract on 1, step forward on &.), followed by 4 claps in front of the chest with feet together facing the front. Repeat.

b)

8 knee bops in time with music.

## **3 TURN & CLAP**

### Stance & Intro

Start centre back with feet together and body held firm with correct posture. Arms straight at sides. Clap hands together in front of chest on count 16 of intro.

### Turn & Clap

Three steps travelling to right whilst turning as follows: Step right foot to right side on demi pointe, left foot to right side on demi pointe turning right to face the back, then step the right foot to the right side on demi pointe turning right to complete a full turn facing the front. All steps are to be bouncy, bending the knee bringing the foot up to the buttocks before taking each step. Hands remain behind the back. Head looks to the right on first step and finishes looking to the front on third step. Small jump to bring feet together with clap in front of chest on count 4.

This step is a basic introduction into chaine turns. It teaches spatial awareness, control of direction whilst stepping and turning, and begins to develop the use of the head for turning. Ensuring each step is on demi pointe, develops control and teaches correct technique used in higher grades for chaine turns, and develops strength in the gastrocnemius and soleus muscles.

Small spring off both feet finishing in a crouch position with hands on the floor slightly in front of the feet. Knees should be together and heels off the floor with head looking at down floor.

Jump up finishing with feet apart, body erect and arms in a high 'V' with palms facing forward and fingers splayed. This jump requires considerable force from the quadriceps and gluteus maximus, that is later used for jumps with elevation.

Step right foot replacing it in second position. Both feet are on the ground on demi pointe and the body is in upright position. The arms fully bend to then extend forward at shoulder height, clicking the fingers.

Keeping the body facing front but leaning slightly forward, transfer the weight to the right foot lowering the heel, and place the ball of the left foot behind the right foot. Both knees bent. Arms fully bend to then extend down along the side of the body, clicking the fingers.

Repeat step and touch behind to opposite side and then once more to the right.

This step requires control and balance of the body, as it moves from upright to leaning positions, transfers weight back and forth, and goes from demi pointe to flat, all at a fast pace. It helps build strength and control in the muscles surrounding the torso (rectus abdominis, erector spinae, external oblique) and in the legs (quadriceps, gluteal group and gastrocnemius).

Step left foot forward, scooping arms from back to forward with elbows bent.

Jump bringing the right foot together to the left foot and clap hands in front of chest.

Repeat all to opposite side.

## **4. DANCE STEPS**

Designed to teach the ability to put together a sequence of various dance steps, and develop fundamental elements such as balance, coordination and control.