

BALLET TERMINOLOGY (VAGANOVA METHOD)

INSTRUCTOR: CYNTHIA DUFAULT

The Russian School/Vaganova Method - The Russian School was founded in St. Petersburg in 1738 by the French dancer, Jean-Baptiste Landé. The French influence continued under such great teachers as Charles Le Picq, Charles Didelot, Christian Johanssen, Jules Perrot, Arthur Saint-Léon, and Marius Petipa. In 1885, Virginia Zucchi, a famous Italian ballerina, appeared in St. Petersburg and created a sensation with her forceful and brilliant Italian technique, which differed from the soft, graceful elegance of the French technique prevalent in Russia until then. Other Italian dancers such as Enrico Cecchetti arrived in Russia and continued to astound the Russians with their amazing dexterity, brilliant pirouettes, tours, and fouettés. The Russian dancers rapidly absorbed everything the Italians had to teach and incorporated it into the Russian system. Thus, the Russian School of Ballet is a development of the French and Italian Schools. During the 1920s, the Russian ballerina and teacher, Agrippina Vaganova developed a planned instructional system which later became known to the whole world as the Vaganova method. This became the basic method of the entire Soviet choreographic school and is still being developed by Vaganova's descendants and their descendants, today.

Agrippina Vaganova [*ah-gree-PEE-nah vah-GAH-naw-vah*] - the greatest Russian ballet teacher of her day (1879-1951). She was a graduate of the St. Petersburg Imperial Ballet School, where she studied under Ivanov, Vazem, Gerdt, Legat, and others. She was accepted into the corps de ballet of the Maryinski Theatre in 1897 and became a ballerina in 1915. She left the stage in 1917 to devote herself to teaching. In 1921, she became a teacher at the Leningrad State Ballet School (formerly the Imperial Ballet School, St. Petersburg) and began developing the instructional system that later became known to the world as the Vaganova method. In 1934, she became head of the Leningrad Choreographic Technicum and published her textbook, *Fundamentals of the Classic Dance*.

Basic Barre Movement

la barre - ballet bar

demi-plié - half leg bend at the knees

grand plié - full/large leg bend at the knees

port de bras - carriage of the arms

épaulment - shouldering

cambré - carriage of the body

demi-pointe - to rise on to the ball of the foot.

relevé - to rise from plié

elevé - to rise to demi-pointe from straight legs.

sus-sous - over-under

détourné - a half-turn to change sides at the barre.

battement - beat or brush the foot on the ground.

battement tendu - foot stretch

sickling- a fault in which the dancer turns in the foot in from the ankle, breaking the straight line of the leg.

battement dégagé - to disengage

temps lié - time measured, to transfer the weight of the body from one leg to the other.

battement fondu - to melt

piqué - to prick

coupé - to cut

sur le cou-de-pied - over the neck of the foot

passé - to pass

retiré - return

pas de cheval - step of the horse

rond de jambe a terre - circle of the leg on the ground en dehors or en dedans.

rond de jambe en l'air - circle of the leg in the air from a la seconde.

grande rond de jambe - large circle of the leg in the air at 90 degrees en dehors or en dedans.

en dehors - outward

en dedans - inward

battement frappé - to strike

petit battement - small beats

petit battement serré - tight, quick beats.
flic-flac - a slap of the foot on the ground in place with a half or whole turn.
battement développé - to developed the leg.
battement enveloppé – to envelope the leg, opposite of develop.
en cloche - bell step
grand battement - big brush

Direction/Facing/Positions

devant - to the front
a la seconde - to the side
derrière - to the back
en croix - in a cross
en bas - low position of the arms
en haut - high position of the arms
ouvert – legs are in fifth but appear open, uncrossed when facing corners right or left in fifth, opposite of croisé.
croisé – legs are in fifth but appear crossed when facing corners right or left in fifth, opposite of ouvert.
écarté - separated, thrown apart, also an open position, facing corners right or left in fifth, downstage leg is in attement tendu a la seconde, same downstage arm is en haut, upstage arm is in a low a la seconde, and focus is in the opposite corner as body. 
effacé - open positioning, facing corners right or left in fifth, upstage leg in battement tendu devant or derrière, upstage arm is in a low a la seconde, downstage arm is en haut, and focus is in the opposite corner as body. 
en face - to face front
de côté - to face side.
en avant - forward, a direction for the execution of a step. Used to indicate that a given step is executed moving forward, toward the audience. As, for example, in glissade en avant.
dessous (duh-SOO)- under, indicates that the working foot passes behind the supporting foot. Example: pas de bourrée dessous.
dessus (duh-SEW)- over, indicates that the working foot passes in front of the supporting foot. Example: pas de bourrée dessus
en tournant - to turn while executing a given step. As, for example, in chassé en tournant.
manège - steps that travel in a circle around the dance area.

Musical Movement Quality/Timing

adagio - slow, sustained movement
allegro - brisk, lively motion
staccato - musical term for musical notes that are played quickly and sharply, opposite of legato.
legato - musical term for musical notes that are played in a smooth, flowing manner, without breaks between notes, opposite of staccato.

Turns

spotting - the action of a dancer's head while turning.
chaîné - a chain or succession of turns
pirouette - A turn on one foot in relevé while the working leg is in passé.
soutenu - sustained, turning on relevé in sus-sous or fifth position.

Petit Allegro

petit allegro - a series of small, quick steps and jumps.
sauté - to jump
assemblé - to assemble
changement - to change
échappé - to escape
royale - a jump, beating the legs once before changing the position of the feet and landing.
bourrée - quick, even steps, often en pointe, giving the appearance of gliding.

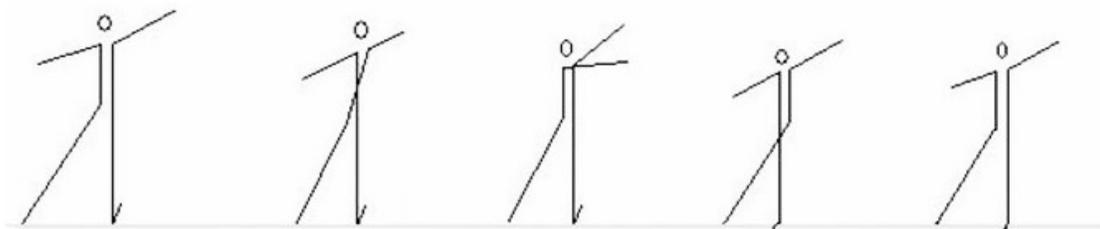
pas de bourrée - beating steps, a three-step movement, also used in grande allegro.
entrechat - a jump with beats rapidly crossing the legs before and behind, *entrechat quatre*.
tour en l'air - a jump turn in the air, also used in grande allegro.
brisé - a jump consisting of an *assemblée* traveling with an extra beat that "breaks" the jump in its travel.
contretemps - beating against time, looks like a brisé, but the body quickly switches from one direction to another and is executed on the "and" before the first down beat, also used in grande allegro.
pas de basque - basque step, also used in grande allegro.
pas de chat - step of the cat, also used in grande allegro.
glissade - to glide, also used in grande allegro.
sissonne - scissor step, also used in grande allegro.
tombé - to fall, also used in grande allegro.

Grand Allegro

grand allegro - a series of large, quick steps and jumps.
faillie - to almost fall, a preparation step for jumps.
grand battement jeté - thrown, a leap with a straight front leg
chassé - chase step
ballotté - To throw about. This is a jump from either one foot or both feet.
cabriole - means caper, a jump where the bottom leg raises to meet and beat the top leg.
fouetté - whipped, also used in adagio.
saut de chat - a leap where the front leg develops.
posé - to pose in a certain position, also used in adagio.
temps de fleche - arrow of time, to jump from one foot to the other passing each other with bent legs in the air.
ballonné - ball-like or bouncing step, hopping in the air on one foot while extending the other leg to the front, side, or back and landing with the extended leg either sur le cou-de-pied or retiré.
tour jeté - a jeté or leap (from one foot to the other) while turning in the air.

Movement Typically Used in Adagio

attitude - to stand on one leg with the other lifted and bend at a 45-degree angle.
penché - Incline, leaning forward in an arabesque.
promenade - a walk or to rotate in a circle on one leg.
renverse - to reverse, moving the leg in a circle en l'air with coordination of the body either as a jump or on the floor, also used in petit allegro.
grande reverence - elaborate curtsy, bow to acknowledge the audience or at the end of class to show respect to their teacher (and, if present, piano accompanist).
arabesque - The body is supported on one leg with the other leg fully extended directly behind the body.
first arabesque - downstage leg is in battement tendu derrière, upstage arm is forward, downstage arm is side.
second arabesque - downstage leg is in battement tendu derrière, downstage arm is forward, upstage arm is side.
Vaganova third arabesque - upstage leg in battement tendu derrière, upstage arm is forward, downstage arm is side.
Vaganova fourth arabesque - upstage leg in battement tendu derrière, downstage arm is forward, upstage arm is side.



First arabesque
Downstage leg in battement tendu derrière, upstage arm is forward downstage arm is side.

Second arabesque
Downstage leg in battement tendu derrière, downstage arm is forward upstage arm is side.

Cecchetti Third arabesque
Downstage leg in battement tendu derrière, both arms front with upstage arm higher than downstage arm.

Cecchetti Fourth arabesque
Vaganova Third arabesque
Upstage leg in battement tendu derrière, upstage arm is forward downstage arm is side.

Vaganova Fourth arabesque
Upstage leg in battement tendu derrière, downstage arm is forward upstage arm is side.

