

Секція № 1

ТЕОРЕТИЧНІ ТА ІСТОРИЧНІ РЕФЛЕКСІЇ МІЖКУЛЬТУРНИХ ЗВ'ЯЗКІВ У КОНТЕКСТІ ГЛОБАЛІЗАЦІЙНИХ ПРОЦЕСІВ

УДК 379.8.016:793.33/.38-053.8

*МΥΚΟΛΑ SHCHERBAN, President and Head
Choreographer at the Carolina Ballroom Company
(Greenville South Carolina USA)*

THE SPECIFICS OF TEACHING BALLROOM AND SOCIAL DANCING TO ADULTS

The Specifics of Ballroom, Latin, Salsa and social dancing in the United States differ tremendously from Ukrainian realities.

Along with competitive dancing, dance studios in America specialize in social dancing even more so. It is because modern life provides very little avenue for adults to express themselves, to have fun and entertaining physical activities, to meet new friends, etc. **Single** adults see Ballroom dancing not just as a learning dances, steps, technique and style, but as a complete avenue to enrich their social life. Adult **couples** also realize that dance lessons provide a great way to spend time with their significant other. In addition to that, «empty nesters» take dance lessons to rejuvenate their personal relationship with each other after their children have left the house.

With the difference of benefits why adults (USA) and children (Ukraine) take dance lessons, there comes large variation in methods of teaching. The dance instructor has to realize that adults, as opposed to children, in majority have already developed their mechanical skills, their muscle memory has been established, their imagination to relay to specific body movement is on a higher level. Therefore, it is easier to explain to adults certain leg action, arm and body movement, timing, characteristics of specific dances. Adults also have much larger life experience which enables instructor to make parallels between certain activities in life and needed action in dancing.

With qualifying «adult» as one of age between 18 and 99+, there come physical limitations at certain age categories. Even more so, some medical reasons (physical, mental, emotional) pro-





vide obstacles to achieve dancing goals as quickly as children would. It is greatly important that certified dance instructor is well knowledgeable in dance techniques, dance steps, variations, and styling. But it is crucial that dance professional is also educated in basic psychology, physiology, anatomy, and medicine in general. That would enable instructor to choose correctly specific technical elements, figures, and requirements depending on the specific adult individual or couple. For a simple example, rise and fall in Waltz would be beneficial for adult's health as it will provide strength to ankles, knees, and hip joints, and it will tone muscles and ligaments. But at the same time, physical limitations in those joints and ligaments should alarm dance instructor to avoid strict attention to the technical execution of such rise and fall. Instead, by minimizing Waltz's rise and fall due to physical limitation, teacher can focus on swing and sway of Waltz.

In addition, single adults and couples enjoy taking lessons with more than one instructor. It is due to proven fact that quality of attention and learning process gets increased with variety of teaching approaches and professional points of view. Ballroom dancing is a lead-follow partnership activity. **Ladies** would benefit dancing and learning with different partners to develop following skills in real social situations. They also become more versatile in adjusting their frames, head positions, size of steps and overall type of movement according to their leader. **Gentleman** are taking lessons and dance with various partners to develop leading skills navigation on the dance floor and building muscle memory amalgamating dance elements into figures and then patterns. It is therefore ladies and gentlemen become more comfortable and confident dancers.

On a personal note, America is known for inventing and using the word «FUN» frequently. You see, Eastern European dancers (primarily children) often do not show enjoyment and excitement during lessons and practice, and just look forward to be at the competition. Adults are much less competitive, but they realize that each lesson, each dance and dancing style is simply «FUN.» It makes them feel good about themselves to interpret the music they dance to, and to improvise with arm styling, with rhythms and elements during their social dancing. It is also «FUN» for them to dance with different partners as they are increasing their dancing versatility. It is therefore certified dance instructor need to be aware that dance lessons for adults should not only include physical movement and learning aspects but also entertainment during such lesson. Taking Ballroom lessons by being adult is commonly referred to the trip to Disney World, but this Disney World is for adults.





It is also important to mention that taking lessons as an adult has many preventive medical reasons. New scientific studies show that illnesses such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, Dementia and others could be prevented or at least delayed by taking dance lessons. Scientists brought simple fact that modern adult during the day is engaged in one of two activities: **physical** (walking, jogging, climbing stairs, etc.) OR **mental** (read book, watch movie, look at social media, etc.). It is very rare that adults are engaged in BOTH activities **simultaneously**. Dancing is one of the activities where mental and physical work provides healthy activity of neurons, raised heart beat is coordinated with increased brain activity.

Our studio, Carolina Ballroom Company specializes exclusively on teaching Ballroom, Latin, Swing, Social dancing to adults. We have established following benefits adults enjoy by taking dance lessons:

- Get more fun and enjoyment out of your social life
- Enjoy increased self confidence
- Meet new people and make new friends
- Improve your overall health
- Feel more at ease in social situations
- Find the exercise and fitness you've wanted
- Make your partner happy
- Enjoy attending more parties
- Find your business relationships improving
- Acquire more grace and poise
- Dress up and have fun
- Overcome shyness
- Relieve stress
- Stand out on the dance floor
- Never say «no» to a dance invitation
- Discover recreation or entertainment in a new way
- Feel refreshed and relaxed

Being aware of such benefits enables dance instructor to modify and adjust teaching process and to customize selection of dance material.

To conclude, learning Ballroom and Latin dancing by being adult provides great life experience, expansive list of benefits – from physical benefits to mental and social ones. Dance professionals of modern era must continue studying such aspect to provide quality dance instruction to adults. They say «Dance Like No One is Watching». But let's face it – they do watch, so everyone must take dance lessons! And we as professionals will strive to welcome you to the Magic of Dance!

