

Chassé

The Newsletter of Friends of Ala Wai Ballroom Dance Academy

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For beginning dancers

Practice makes more than perfect

By Michael Yap, Dance Director

My first experiences with dancing were, for the most part, frustrating and awkward. I say for the most part because the one thing that has kept me on this journey to becoming a better dancer has been the people that I've met along the way.

One person who stands out is my first dance instructor. He was there to help me in my development as a dancer. He gave me advice and made recommendations that have been more than helpful.

I would like to share these recommendations with those who are just starting out themselves. They may help ease some of the frustration and awkwardness that all of us have experienced.

First, practice your dance patterns outside of class. As simple as this may seem, it really does accelerate the learning curve through muscle memory.

Many new students take class once a week and then do not review the material at all, forgetting everything they've learned before the next class. Consequently, they have to start all over again the following week and have a harder time learning the new

material presented. As time and classes go by, the student falls farther and farther behind until, finally, frustration sets in because now there is just too much to learn all at once.

Another helpful piece of advice that my first teacher offered me is to take notes. It doesn't matter what words you use or what format you employ.

What does matter is that you're able to interpret your notes at a later time to help you remember what you learned in class. You will develop your note taking skills as time goes by and you will be a better dancer because of it.

Finally, he told me to acquire some ballroom dance music to practice with. Music is easily ordered through various websites and cost roughly \$30 to \$40 for a good mixture of standard and Latin rhythms.

Many websites provide opportunities for you to listen before you buy. Order music that sounds good and makes you want to dance. After all is said and done, isn't that what it's all about? Enjoy your dancing.

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Spring Classes start April 14

Second-quarter classes will begin on Wednesday, April 14, 2010. The classes will include beginning cha cha, from 7-7:40 p.m. Beginning/Intermediate Quickstep follows from 7:45-8:25 p.m. and Intermediate Rumba, from 8:30-9:10 p.m. Classes are held every Wednesday at the Palladium (2nd floor Ala Wai Golf Course Multi-Purpose Facility).