

## Dance Quotes...

==A==

In life as in dance: Grace glides on blistered feet.

--Alice Abrams

Dance isn't something that can be explained in words; it has to be danced.

--Paige Arden

Everything in the universe has rhythm. *Everything* dances.

--Maya Angelou

I have no desire to prove anything by dancing. I have never used it as an outlet or a means of expressing myself. I just dance. I just put my feet in the air and move them around.

--Fred Astaire

I would rather dance as a ballerina, though faultily, than as a flawless clown.

--Margaret Atwood in "Lady Oracle"

Dance till the stars come down from the rafters

Dance, Dance, Dance till you drop.

--W. H. Auden

All the dancer's gestures are signs of things, and the dance called rational, because it aptly signifies and displays something over and above the pleasure of the senses.

--St. Augustine

Fine dancing, I believe like virtue, must be its own reward. Those who are standing by are usually thinking of something very different.

--Jane Austen

==B==

A dance is a measured pace, as a verse is a measured speech.

--Sir Francis Bacon

Dance is music made visible.

--George Balanchine

First comes the sweat. Then comes the beauty if you're very lucky and have said your prayers.

--George Balanchine

Someone once said that dancers work just as hard as policeman, always alert, always tense, but see, policeman don't have to be beautiful at the same time.

--George Balanchine

I don't want people who want to dance, I want people who have to dance.

--George Balanchine

The mirror is not you. The mirror is you looking at yourself.

--George Balanchine

## Dance Quotes...

You haven't got anything to dance about until you're over thirty-five anyway.

--Bert Balladine

What Horace says is

*Eheu fugaces*

*Anni labuntur, Postume, Postume,*

Years glide away and are lost to me, lost to me!

Now, when the folks in the dance sport their merry toes,

Taglionis and Ellslers, Duvernays, and Ceritos,

Sighing I murmur, "*O mihi praeteritos!*"

--Canon R. H. Barham

*Eheu...* Horace, Odes ii, 14: "Alas, Postumus, Postumus, the fleeting years roll by." *O mihi...* Beginning of Vergil, Aeneid 8:560; entire line is "O that Jupiter would bring the vanished years back to me."

The essence of all art is to have pleasure in giving pleasure.

--Mikhail Baryshnikov

I do not try to dance better than anyone else. I only try to dance better than myself.

--Mikhail Baryshnikov

Dancing can reveal all the mystery that music conceals.

--Charles Baudelaire

There are short-cuts to happiness, and dancing is one of them.

--Vicki Baum

Dance first. Think later. It's the natural order.

--Samuel Beckett

A correct execution of an *adagio* is the *ne plus ultra* of our art; and I look on it as the touch-stone of the dancer.

--Carlo Blasis

Ballet is not technique but a way of expression that comes more closely to the inner language of man than any other.

--George Borodin

When I dance, I cannot judge, I cannot hate, I cannot separate myself from life. I can only be joyful and whole, that is why I dance.

--Hans Bos

It is not so much upon the number of exercises, as the care with which they are done, that progress and skill depend.

--Auguste Bournonville

All there is to be said for work compared to dance is that the latter is so much easier.

--Heywood Broun

The one thing that can solve most of our problems is dancing.

Any problem in the world can be solved by dancing.

--James Brown (2 versions)

## Dance Quotes...

A child sings before it speaks, dances almost before it walks, music is with us from the beginning.

--Pamela Brown

Dance can give the inarticulate a voice

--Pamela Brown

The human animal dances wildest on the edge of the grave.

--Rita Mae Brown

Dance every performance as if it were your last.

--Erik Bruhn

In life, as in art, the beautiful moves in curves.

--Bulwer-Lytton

On with the dance! Let joy be unconfined.

--Lord Byron

==C==

Kind are her answers,  
But her performance keeps no day;  
Breaks time, as dancers  
From their own Music when they stray.

--Thomas Campion

The further off from England the nearer is to France--  
Then turn not pale, beloved snail, but come and join the dance.

--Lewis Carroll

*La danse, c'est le mouvement, et le mouvement, c'est la vie.*

("Dance is movement, and movement is life.")

--Ludmilla Chiriaeff (Founder, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens)

For hardly any man dances when sober, unless he is insane. Nor does he dance while alone, nor at a respectable and moderate party. Dancing is the final phase of a wild party with fancy decorations and a multitude of delights.

*[Nemo enim fere saltat sobrius, nisi insanit, neque in solitudine neque in convivio moderato et honesto. tempestivi convivi, amoeni loci, multarum deliciarum comes est extrema saltatio.]*

--Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Pro Murena*

You've got to sing like you don't need the money,  
Love like you'll never get hurt.  
You've got to dance like no one is watching,  
It's gotta come from the heart, if you want it to work.

-- Susannah Clark and Richard Leigh

## *Dance Quotes...*

Dancing is at once rational & healthful: it gives animal spirits; it is the natural amusement of young people, & such it has been from the days of Moses.

--William Cobbett

We have no adequate conception of the perfection of the ancient tragic dance. The pleasure which the greeks received from it had for its basis difference; & the more unfit the vehicle, the more lively was the curiosity & intense the delights at seeing the difficulty overcome.

--S. T. Coleridge

How inimitably graceful children are in general--before they learn to dance.

--S. T. Coleridge

Dancing is like dreaming with your feet!

--Constanze

Good choreography fuses eye, ear, and mind.

---Arlene Croce

1. Beginning dancer. Knows nothing.
2. Intermediate dancer. Knows everything. Too good to dance with beginners.
3. Hotshot dancer. Too good to dance with anyone.
4. Advanced dancer. Dances everything. Especially with beginners.

--Attributed to Dick Crum(?), a folk dance teacher

I'd rather learn from one bird how to sing than to teach ten thousand stars how not to dance.

--e. e. cummings

The only way to do it is to do it.

--Merce Cunningham

==D==

Dance is your pulse, your heartbeat, your breathing. It's the rhythm of your life. It's the expression in time and movement, in happiness, joy, sadness and envy.

--Jaques D'Amboise

So, I think I would say, enjoy the process of learning to dance. The process of our profession, and not its final achievement, is the heart and soul of dance.

--Jacques d'Amboise

Ballet technique is arbitrary and very difficult. It never becomes easy--it becomes possible.

--Agnes de Mille

To dance is to be out of yourself, larger, more powerful, more beautiful. This is power, it is glory on earth and it is yours for the taking.

--Agnes de Mille

Toe dancing is a dandy attention getter, second only to screaming.

--Agnes de Mille

## *Dance Quotes...*

The truest expression of a people is in its dance and in its music. Bodies never lie.

--Agnes de Mille

There is a bit of insanity in dancing that does everybody a great deal of good.

--Edwin Denby

You don't have to know about ballet to enjoy it, all you have to do is look at it.

--Edwin Denby

When you are fifty, you're neither young nor old; you're just uninteresting. When you are sixty, and still dancing, you become something of a curiosity. And boy! if you hit seventy, and can still get a foot off the ground, you're phenomenal!

--Ruth St Denis

I have performed for thousands when they found me exotic, the vogue, daring, but I have danced, at any given time, for about ten people.... They were the ones that left the theater forever different from the way they were when they came in. All of my long, long life, I have danced for those ten.

--Ruth St. Denis

O, Love's but a dance,  
Where Time plays the fiddle!  
See the couples advance,--  
O, Love's but a dance!  
A whisper, a glance,  
"Shall we twirl down the middle?"  
O, Love's but a dance,  
Where Time plays the fiddle!  
--Henry Austin Dobson

Dancing is the last word in life. In dancing one draws nearer to oneself.

--Jean Dubuffet

Dancing is the poetry of the foot.

--John Dryden

Dancing: The Highest Intelligence in the Freest Body.

--Isadora Duncan

If I could tell you what it meant, there would be no point in dancing it.

"No, I can't explain the dance to you; If I could say it--I wouldn't have to dance it!"

--Isadora Duncan (2 versions)

==E==

Dancing is the loftiest, the most moving, the most beautiful of the arts, because it is not mere translation or abstraction from life; it is life itself.

--Havelock Ellis

==F==

## *Dance Quotes...*

Dance is so important in the world. It needs no language. Our bodies speak a language of its own.

--Ibrahim Farrah

My friends and I had taken dancing lessons, although none of us would ever admit it. In those depression days, a friend of my mother was trying to make a living by teaching dancing in the evening, in an upstairs dance studio. There was a back door to the place, and she arranged it so the young men could come up through the back way without being seen.

--Richard Feynman

Great artists are people who find ways to be themselves in their art. Any sort of pretension induces mediocrity in art and life alike.

--Margot Fonteyn

I explained it when I danced it.

--Margot Fonteyn (asked to explain a performance)

Dancing's just a conversation between two people. Talk to me.

--Hope Floats

Genius is another word for magic, and the whole point of magic is that it is inexplicable.

--Margot Fonteyn

The one important thing I have learnt over the years is the difference between taking one's work seriously and taking oneself seriously. The first is imperative and the second disastrous.

--Margot Fonteyn

I have the same opinion of dances that physicians have of mushrooms: the best of them are good for nothing.

--St Francis de Sales

Good dancers have mostly better heels than heads.

--Thomas Fuller

==G==

Correction does much, but encouragement does more.

Encouragement after censure is as the sun after a shower.

--Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Samuel Goldwyn: What kind of dancing does Martha Graham do?

Associate: Modern dancing.

Goldwyn: I don't want her then, modern dancing is so old fashioned.

--Samuel Goldwyn

Great dancers are not great because of their technique; they are great because of their passion.

--Martha Graham

Its what I always wanted to do, to show the laughter, the fun the joy of dance.

--Martha Graham

## *Dance Quotes...*

Dance is the hidden language of the soul.

--Martha Graham

Dancing is just discovery, discovery, discovery.

--Martha Graham

Movement never lies. It is a barometer telling the state of the soul's weather.

--Martha Graham

Dance is a song of the body. Either of joy or pain.

--Martha Graham

Wherever a dancer stands is holy ground.

--Martha Graham

Dance is communication, and so the great challenge is to speak clearly, beautifully, and with inevitability.

--Martha Graham

Nothing is more revealing than movement.

--Martha Graham

Freedom to a dancer means discipline. That is what technique is for--liberation.

--Martha Graham

The spine is the tree of life. Respect it.

--Martha Graham

Technical perfection is insufficient. It is an orphan without the true soul of the dancer.

--Sylvie Guillem

==H==

To me, boxing is like a ballet, except there's no music, no choreography, and the dancers hit each other.

--Jack Handey

The dance is a poem of which each movement is a word.

--Mata Hari

Learning to walk sets you free. Learning to dance gives you the greatest freedom of all: to express your whole self, the person you are.

--Melissa Hayden

Aren't all ballets sexy? I think they should be. I can think of nothing more kinky than a prince chasing a swan around all night.

--Sir Robert Murray Helpman

## *Dance Quotes...*

For though man has sorrow and grief in his soul, at once he forgets his dark thoughts and remembers not his troubles. Such is the holy gift of Terpsichore.

--Hesiod, 7th century BC

So you can't dance? Not at all? Not even one step? . . . How can you say that you've taken any trouble to live when you won't even dance?

--Hermann Hesse

He who cannot dance puts the blame on the floor.

--Hindu proverb

Dance for yourself. If someone else understands, good. If not, no matter. Go right on doing what interests you, and do it until it stops interesting you.

Dance for yourself, if someone understands good. If not then no matter, go right on doing what you love.

--Louis Horst (2 versions)

Oh, 'tis jesting, dancing, drinking

Spins the heavy world around.

--A. E. Housman

==I==

==J==

Common sense and a sense of humor are the same thing, moving at different speeds. A sense of humor is just common sense, dancing.

--Clive James

Dance is bigger than the physical body. Think bigger than that. When you extend your arm, it doesn't stop at the end of your fingers, because you're dancing bigger than that: your dancing spirit.

--Judith Jamison

All dancing girls are nineteen years old.

--Japanese proverb

[Lord Chesterfield's Letters] teach the morals of a whore, and the manners of a dancing master.

--Samuel Johnson

What we hope ever to do with ease, we must first learn to do with diligence.

--Samuel Johnson

==K==

==L==

It takes an athlete to dance, but an artist to be a dancer.

--Shanna LaFleur

Technique--bodily control--must be mastered only because the body must not stand in the way of the soul's expression.



## *Dance Quotes...*

The only reason for mastering technique is to make sure the body does not prevent the soul from expressing itself.

--La Meri (2 versions)

We ought to dance with rapture that we might be alive...and part of the living, incarnate cosmos.

--D. H. Lawrence

They dined on mince, and slices of quince,  
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;  
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,  
They danced by the light of the moon.

--Edward Lear

Football isn't a contact sport; it's a collision sport. Dancing is a contact sport.

--Vince Lombardi

==M==

Dance is an art that imprints on the soul. It is with you every moment, it expresses itself in everything you do.

--Shirley Maclaine

Then come the lights shining on you from above. You are a performer. You forget all you learned, the process of technique, the fear, the pain, you even forget who you are you become one with the music, the lights, indeed one with the dance.

--Shirley Maclaine

Even the ears must dance.

--Natalia Makarova

Poetry is like dancing. Not all of us can be ballet dancers but all of us dance. Everyone has a poet inside of him struggling to get out.

--Marks and Spencer spokesman on the hiring of an in-house poet to help bring out the creativity of its staff.

The ballet. I saw in the fugitive beauty of a dancer's gesture a symbol of life. It was achieved at the cost of unending effort but, with all the forces of gravity against it, a fleeting poise in mid-air, a lovely attitude worthy to be made immortal in a bas-relief, it was lost as soon as it was gained and there remained no more than the memory of an exquisite emotion. So life, lived variously and largely, becomes a work of art only when brought to its beautiful conclusion and is reduced to nothingness in the moment when it arrives at perfection.

--W. Somerset Maugham

The Marquesan girls dance all over; not only do their feet dance, but their arms, hands, fingers, ay, their very eyes seem to dance in their heads.

--Herman Melville

He [Gene Kelly] once told me dancing was a man's game, as much of a sport as baseball itself. And he made us believe that. He changed our minds and suddenly, all of America wanted to dance just like Gene Kelly.

--Liza Minnelli

## *Dance Quotes...*

Those who danced were thought to be quite insane by those who could not hear the music.

--Angela Monet (also attributed to Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche)

Come & trip it as ye go  
On the light fantastic toe.

--John Milton

All the ills of mankind,  
All the tragic misfortunes that fill the history books,  
All the political blunders,  
All the failures of the great leaders,  
Have arisen merely from a lack of skill at dancing.

--from a Molière play

Dancing is wonderful training for girls; it's the first way you learn to guess what a man is going to do before he does it.

--Christopher Morley

==N==

We should consider every day lost on which we have not danced at least once.

--Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

I do not know what the spirit of a philosopher could more wish to be than a good dancer. For the dance is his ideal, also his fine art; finally also the only kind of piety he knows, his "divine service."

-- Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

I should not believe in a God who does not dance.

--Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

Dancing in all its forms cannot be excluded from the curriculum of all noble education: dancing with the feet, with ideas, with words, and, need I add that one must also be able to dance with the pen?

--Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

Through dancing many maidens have been unmaidened, whereby I may say it is the storehouse and nursery of bastardy.

--John Northbrooke

When the music and dance create with accord...their magic captivates both the heart and the mind.

--Jean Georges Noverre

==O==

==P==

To dance is to give oneself up to the rhythms of all life.

--Dr Maya V. Patel

## *Dance Quotes...*

Master technique and then forget about it and be natural.

--Anna Pavlova

Hence it is from the representation of things spoken by means of posture and gesture that the whole of the art of dance has been elaborated.

--Plato

To sing well and to dance is to be well educated.

--Plato

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,  
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.

--Alexander Pope

And men must walk at least before they dance.

--Alexander Pope

Music begins to atrophy when it departs too far from the dance.

--Ezra Pound

A cathedral, a wave of a storm, a dancer's leap, never turn out to be as high as we had hoped.

--Marcel Proust

Ballet is a dance executed by the human soul.

--Pushkin

==Q==

==R==

Dance is like life, it exists as you're flitting through it, and when it's over, it's done.

--Jerome Robbins

You need the courage to seem foolish and to fail.

--Steven A. Rosenberg (1993)

If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly.

--Gilbert Keith Chesterton

All the gestures of children are graceful; the reign of distortion and unnatural attitudes commences with the introduction of the dancing master.

--Sir Joshua Reynolds

The gymnasium of running, walking on stilts, climbing, etc. stells and makes hardy single powers and muscles, but dancing, like a corporeal poesy, embellishes, exercises, and equalizes all the muscles at once.

-- Jean Paul Richter

(*Stell*: to place firmly in position.)

I was a ballerina. I had to quit after I injured a groin muscle. It wasn't mine.

--Rita Rudner

## Dance Quotes...

==S==

I see dance being used as communication between body and soul, to express what it too deep to find for words.

--Ruth St. Denis

Talk about dance? Dance is not something to talk about. Dance is to dance.

--Peter Saint James

To those of us with real understanding, dancing is the only pure art form.

--Charles Schulz [in *Peanuts* (Snoopy speaking)]

To live is to dance, to dance is to live.

--Charles Schulz [in *Peanuts* (Snoopy speaking)]

O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,  
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?

--Sir Walter Scott

There was never a merry world since the fairies left off dancing.

--John Selden

He capers, he dances, he has eyes of youth, he writes verses, he speaks holiday, he smells April and May.

--Shakespeare (Merry Wives of Windsor)

She is your treasure, she must have a husband;  
I must dance bare-foot on her wedding day,  
And, for your love to her, lead apes in hell.

--Shakespeare (Taming of the Shrew)

When you do dance, I wish you  
A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do  
Nothing but that.

--Shakespeare (Winter's Tale)

Dance is the only art of which we ourselves are the stuff of which it is made.

--Ted Shawn

There was an old clerk of Columbus  
Who wearied of totalling numbus,  
So he moved to East Lansing  
And spent his time dancing  
Maxixes, merengues, and rhumbus.

--Col. G. L. Sicherman [sicherman@lucent.com](mailto:sicherman@lucent.com)

Dancing is silent poetry.

--Simonides

## *Dance Quotes...*

But oh, she dances such a way!  
No sun upon an Easter-day  
Is half so fine a sight  
--Sir John Suckling

==T==

All night have the roses heard  
The flute, violin, bassoon;  
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd  
To the dancers dancing in tune;  
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,  
And a hush with the setting moon.  
--Alfred, Lord Tennyson

They who love dancing too much seem to have more brains in their feet than in their head.  
--Terence (c. 190-159 BC)

Dancing is like bank robbery, it takes split second timing.  
--Twyla Tharp

==U==

==V==

Whoever has seen the masked at a ball dance amicably together, and take hold of hands without knowing each other, leaving the next moment to meet no more, can form an idea of the world.  
--Vauvenargues

Dancing is an art because it is subject to rules.  
--Voltaire

Let us read and let us dance--two amusements that will never do any harm to the world.  
--Voltaire

==W==

==X==

==Y==

When I play on my fiddle in Dooney  
Folk dance like a wave on the sea.  
--William Butler Yeats

O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,  
How can we know the dancer from the dance?  
--William Butler Yeats

...rhythmically challenged dancelexic  
--Younta [from Icono Clast]

## *Dance Quotes...*

==Z==

==Unattributed==

A day I don't dance is a day I don't live.

--Anonymous Tunisian dancer

In either the Apocrypha or the Dead Sea Scrolls, Jesus says: "Blessed are the dancers...." [ellipsis in original]

The waltz is a dance of quite too loose a character, and unmarried ladies should refrain from it...very young married ladies may be allowed to waltz if it is very seldom....

--From "The Gentleman and Lady's Book of Politeness," 2nd American edition, Boston: Allen and Ticknor and Carter, Hendee & Co., 1833.

Anyone who says sunshine brings happiness has never danced in the rain.

--Source unknown

The Ballet toe shoe is one of the few instruments of torture to survive intact into our time.

--Source unknown

Contra dancing is the most fun you can have with your clothes on!

--Source unknown

Dance is a delicate balance between perfection and beauty.

--Source unknown

If you're on thin ice you might as well be dancing.

--Source unknown

It's not the turning that hard in pirouettes, it's that you gotta keep on doin' it.

--Source unknown

Remember, Ginger Rogers did everything that Fred Astaire did, backwards and on high heels.

--Source unknown

(Attributed variously to Linda Ellerbee, Ann Richards, and Faith Whittlesey, and--apparently spuriously--to Rogers herself)

Socrates learned to dance when he was 70 because he felt that an essential part of himself had been neglected.

--Source unknown

The dance is simply the luminous manifestation of the dancer's soul, natural but not initiative speaking in movement out of himself, that which is greater than all parts of the self.

--Source unknown

They say practice makes perfect, but no one is perfect so why then practice?

--Source unknown

Writing about music is like dancing about architecture.

--Source unknown

## *Dance Quotes...*

You can dance anywhere, even if only in your heart.

--Source unknown