Ballroom dancing gives a real workout

Ballroom dancing is reborn and catching the interest of all ages for exercise or just for fun.

Called the aerobics of the 1990s, ballroom dancing will be an exhibition sport in the 1992 Olympic games.

Dancing the Foxtrot, the Tango and the Jitterbug, the Ohio State Ballroom Dance Association is playing its role in encouraging the sport of the future.

The group provides the Ohio State community an opportunity to dance and to get people more involved, said Roy Tassava, faculty adviser of the group.

The enthusiasm is catching on, Tassava said. The group gives students a chance to learn how to ballroom dance, he said.

According to Tassava the group was formed six years ago to foster and enhance ballroom dance on the Ohio State campus and in the Columbus community.

Ballroom dancing is on the upswing and the credit for this group's success goes to the students, Tassava said. He said the students are doing a great job of moving the group along.

DANCE

JULIE MACDONALD

The Ohio State Ballroom Dance Association is a registered student organization at the university offered to students, faculty, staff and the Columbus community. "Since last year we have doubled in size," said Jeff Grace, vice president of the group.

Grace, who has been dancing for 16 years and is a member of the National Dance Council of America, coaches the group's 10 member competitive team.

The zealously sported has gained the Presidents Seal of Physical Fitness and is recommended by cardiologists, Grace said.

Ballroom dancing is a cardiovascular exercise used as therapy for arthritis and to rebuild damaged heart muscles, he said.

The United States Amateur Ballroom Dance Association is part of an intercollegiate network of teams who compete all over the United States, Grace said.

Grace estimates 40 universities are involved in the program. The universities involved are very diverse, ranging from Big Ten schools to Ivy Leagues. The teams compete for trophies and ribbons, and are eagerly awaiting an international competition in England.

Ohio State's performance team won a first place trophy in a competition at Notre Dame on Dec. 2, 1989 and plans to host a competition here at the end of April, Grace said.

Five universities: Notre Dame, University of Wisconsin, University of Illinois, a combination team from Kentucky, and Ohio State will compete. "The team members are enthusiastic," Grace said.

The dance group meets every Sunday for a dance. They have tentatively scheduled a professional ballroom dancer to teach a free, one-hour lesson at the beginning of the dance.

"It's a tremendous thing," Tassava said. The instructor will teach the first and third Sunday of each month beginning Jan. 21. "People just don't realize the opportunity," Tassava said.

Columbus is the headquarters for the Ohio Star Ball, one of the largest amateur competitions and professional championships in the world, Grace said. Columbus is a big ballroom dance city and the residence of many professional ballroom dancers.

The Ohio Star Ball is being televised Wednesday, Jan. 10, on channel 34 (WOSU-TV).

The students love it, Grace said. "People of all ages join. People who don't even know how to dance," he said.

You don't need a partner to join the group, most people who are members have just shown an interest in the sport, Grace said.

Karen Walsh, member of the club and a student at Ohio State majoring in Science Education, agrees. "You don't have to go and feel like you know anything. You will learn and have fun," she said.

The Ohio State Ballroom Dance Association meets all four quarters in the basement of the Ohio Union. The group dances to recorded music on Sunday from 6:30-8:30 p.m., and starting Jan. 21, from 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Move over Fred and Ginger

Photos by Jessica Vines
Story by Jo Crawford

If you enjoy dancing but don't get into slammin' or hip-hop, Ohio State's Ballroom Dance Association may have an interesting alternative to offer you.

The Ballroom Dance Association encourages students and community members to become involved in ballroom dancing, said Roy Tassava, the group's faculty adviser.

The association's most popular ballroom dances are; waltz, foxtrot, swing, rhumba and cha-cha, Tassava said. He said members also do the mambo, which was made popular by the movie 'Dirty Dancing'.

The association also has a competitive team that competes against teams from other universities around the country, Tassava said.

At competitions, the dance team competes in pairs and in a formation team consisting of four couples, said Stacey Coil, president of the Ballroom Dance Association.

The formation team performs either American-style dance — which includes tango, swing, rhumba and waltz — or international-style dance, which includes jive, cha-cha, quick step, and waltz, Coil said.

The Ballroom Dance Association will hold its competition on May 2 at the Masonic Temple on North Fourth and Gay Streets in downtown Columbus, said Chris Jelen, the vice president of the club.

Aside from competition, the dance team also performs for groups such as Circle K and the OSU Board of Trustees, Coil said.

The Ballroom Dance Association is a university club with a constitution, officers and a faculty adviser, Tassava said. The club is not a regular sponsored sport, he said.

The association has a membership of about 30 students, Tassava said.

All students are welcome to come to the meetings, which are held Sunday evenings from 5:30 to 7:30 when classes are in session.

The first hour of the meetings consist of free dance lessons, and the second hour is open dancing, Tassava said.

Tassava said that students who come to the meetings don't have to bring partners; they can pair up with other single people.

Greg Rodgers, an honorary member of the team, dips junior Andrea Houchard during a Sunday night team practice in the Union.
The team practices to the song "Run Around Sue", by Dion, for their exhibition dance during the May competition.

Senior Dan Riggs, an education major from Pomeroy, Ohio, and team director Elaine Barret, a microbiology graduate from Cincinnati, try a new move from the "Cha-Cha."
Kellie Teeters, the formation coach of the team, instructs President Stacy Coil to keep a tight grip on her hand while dancing together.

Junior Andrea Houckard, an English major from Plain City, and Tom Mako, an electrical engineering graduate, dance together during open dance.
OSU dance club to host 7th annual ballroom contest

By Angela Miller
Lantern arts writer

The attitude of the tango and the vivacity of the cha-cha will fill the Ohio Union Ballroom Saturday and Sunday during the Seventh annual OSU Dancesport Classic.

Dancers will compete in categories such as American Smooth, American Rhythm and International Latin that include dances such as the waltz, tango, swing, fox trot, and quick step.

Members of the dance team said they enjoy ballroom dancing for the formality of the whole event.

"I like the whole attitude of the 'lady and the gentleman' kind of thing," said Katie Loughlin, member of the ballroom dancing team.

She said she likes how much respect the women are treated with, the whole atmosphere of getting dressed up and the high society feeling of the competitions.

"It really makes me feel beautiful," said Stephanie Hoffner, a junior in microbiology and ballroom dancer.

She said she likes the pageantry of dancing and everything that goes with it.

Dancing is also a really good workout, she said, and it is much more fun than working out at Larkins Hall.

Carlos Brun, a senior microbiology major, said he thinks of ballroom dancing as the "contact sport of the '90s." He said it is a non-intimidating way of meeting people.

He said he likes channeling the emotion and feeling of the dance to the audience.

The dancing is a form of expression and interpretation of the music, Brun said.

The Ballroom Dance Association at OSU is a club that teaches ballroom dancing.

Hoffner recommended joining the club and dancing with them for at least a month before trying out for the ballroom dancing team, which usually has around 30 members.

She said in the last few years the club has gained popularity, with the membership now reaching 100 people.

The ballroom dancing team competes year-round with other Big Ten universities as well as Case Western Reserve, Carnegie-Mellon University, The University of Maryland, George Washington University and Brown University.

The competition will begin Saturday at 8 a.m. and admission is $2 for students.