

**In some countries dance is such an important art form that it's much more than entertainment. Here are four dances that are so culturally important that they are considered national dances.**

**A**

Like many folk dances, the national dance of Peru, the Marinera, involves a male and a female dancer. Unusually, however, in this dance the woman leads and the man follows. The dance represents the initiation of a romance, but there is no physical contact between the dancers. Instead, the woman steps gracefully around the stage and the man mirrors her movements as he repeatedly moves towards her then away from her. The woman holds the edge of her large skirt in one hand and a white handkerchief in the other. The man also holds a white handkerchief in the air, and the movement of the cloth is said to symbolise the flight of birds and the movement of waves. Traditionally, the man dances in a wide-brimmed hat which he incorporates playfully into the dance and the woman dances barefoot. The rhythm of the Marinera, blends Latin American, Spanish, Gypsy and African influences, reflecting Peru's history. The music for it is played on four Spanish guitars and a basic wooden drum.

**B**

Ukraine's national dance, the hopak, began as a way for soldiers to celebrate and re-create their victories in the 16th century. Although women often take part in hopak dances nowadays, that wasn't always the case and their role is still very much secondary. This energetic dance is all about men showing off their strength and acrobatic ability and there is often a competition towards the end of the performance. The men, wearing baggy bright red or blue trousers, boots and embroidered shirts, take turns to give short solo performances to see who can perform the most spectacular leaps. The dance is actually named after this aspect of the performance, as it comes from a Ukrainian word meaning "to leap and stamp the feet". The most famous hopak move is the "duck kick", which involves performing a high kick from a squatting position.

**C**

If you don't move perfectly in time with the rhythm of the national dance of the Philippines, you can get hurt. That's because the dance is performed above poles of bamboo which are banged on the ground and against each other by people sitting at the ends of them. The tinikling dance is named after a bird, the tikling, which is known for its speed and grace. Over time the tikling learned to avoid being caught in Philippino farmers' bamboo traps through well-timed leg movements. The original idea of the dance was to imitate the bird's skill in avoiding being captured. But the bamboo sticks don't just represent the bird traps; they also provide percussion sounds for the performance. The dancers have to be very confident, because as the dance progresses the banging of the bamboo becomes harder and faster, providing a thrilling spectacle for the audience as the dancers step into and out of the space in between the bamboo poles at just the right moments. Experienced tinikling dancers can do it without ever looking down.

**D**

If you ever go to a New Year party or wedding in Laos in south-east Asia, you should expect to be invited onto the dancefloor. The country's national dance, the lam vong, is a dance that everyone takes part in, and not just because the dance is believed to bring love and good luck. The dance is used in Laos as a way to make guests feel relaxed and at home. There's nothing to worry about if you're not a good dancer, however. This simple dance is performed to quite a slow tempo and involves nothing more than parading around the room alongside your partner and moving your hands around in the air in opposing directions. The men form one circle and the women form another and keep the same partners throughout the dance.

You are going to read an article about dances around the world. For questions 1-10, choose one of the texts (A-D). Each text may be the answer to more than one question. 

Which text is about a dance that ...

Text **A**

Text **B**

Text **C**

Text **D**

was inspired by a bird.

1 

people believe will improve their lives.

2 

once represented acts of violence.

3 

people use to welcome visitors.

4 

has a rhythm that changes.

5 

involves men copying women.

6 

symbolises a relationship.

7 

involves a little danger.

8 

people try to be the best at.

9 

has elements from several continents.

10 

## Vocabulary

Fill in: 

lead

office

outstanding

released

affairs

episode

highlights

cast

chapter

tabloids

- 1 I'm going to watch the  of the match tonight. 
- 2 She gave a(n)  performance as Queen Elizabeth I. 
- 3 I just want to finish reading this  before I go to bed. 
- 4 The director was reluctant to cast the unknown actress in the  role. 
- 5 There's a new  of my favourite show on TV tonight. 
- 6 Both *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings* were box- hits. 
- 7 I prefer  to broadsheets. 
- 8 Do you watch current  programmes? 
- 9 Their new CD will be  in May. 
- 10 The entire  celebrated the success of the opening night. 

Put the words in the correct category. 

actor

animation

cameraman

drama

dressing room

fan

fiction

novel

publisher

screenwriter

stadium

theatre

venue

vocalist

people 	places 	types 

Fill in: 

perform

outstanding

visual

production

tabloid

glossy

box-office

lead

narrative

supporting

- 1 If you want trivial news stories, you should read a(n)  newspaper. 
- 2 The action in this amazing film was created by the use of  effects. 
- 3 Sue always checks out the latest fashion in the  magazines. 
- 4 John used to be the drummer before he became the  vocalist in the band. 
- 5 He won the best actor Oscar for his  performance in the film. 
- 6 This new science-fiction film is sure to pull in large crowds and become a(n)  hit. 
- 7 The lead actor thanked his  cast when he won the acting award. 
- 8 The band's concerts always sell out whenever they decide to  live. 
- 9 Her books are always so popular due to her energetic and humorous  style. 
- 10 The film spent over a year in the  stage before filming finally began. 