Chapter 27

Dances Around the World

It's no secret that people everywhere, of all different walks of life and cultures, love to dance. Whether it be to express emotion, to celebrate, or for ritual purposes, the art of dance is not limited to one place: it is everywhere. Let's explore some famous dances around the world.

The Samba : Brazil

Brought to Brazil during the times of Portuguese colonization, this dance is widely associated with the world renowned Brazilian Rio Carnival. There are over seven variations of the samba; all are accompanied by samba music, a type of favourful, upbeat music typically involving guitars, tambourines and drums.

The Flamenco - Spain

Out of the country of Spain emerges the Flamenco. This dance, or jaleo, is performed to the beat of Spanish guitar. It is then accompanied by singing, finger snapping and hand clapping.

The Dragon Dance : China

This cultural dance is performed during celebratory festivals including weddings and the Chinese new year. Originating amongst Chinese farming communities during the Han Dynasty of 180-230AD, the Dragon dance is performed to ward off evil spirits and bad luck, and is thought to bring good fortune.

The Viennese Waltz : Austria

This classic ballroom dance, which starts slow, then speeds up in three-quarter time, led to -the creation of the first public dance hall. Following the Civil war, the Vienniese waltz spread to the US, resulting in Americanized variations of the dance, including the Boston Waltz, otherwise known as the Boston Dip.

Hopak : Ukraine

Further north, Russians and Ukrainians are dancing the Hopak, or the gopak in Russia. Named after the Ukrainian term hopaty, meaning "to jump", Russians and Ukrainians have been performing this dance since the 16th century.

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Adumu "Aigus" : Kenya

Next on the list, is the traditional African Adumu dance. Performed by the Maasai tribes of East Africa, the Adumu, also known as the Aigus, is a competitive jumping dance performed as a part of Eonoto, a Maasai coming of age ceremony for warriors; a right of passage that initiates a boy into a man.

The Zaouli : Ivory Coast

The Zaouli mask dance is only allowed to be viewed by those permitted to watch; no women are allowed to present during the dance. Once the Zaouli dancer puts on their mask, the performer begins to change, a representation of the spirit taking over the dancer's body. This dance is reflective of the culture of the Ivory Coast, where people often turned to these masks when there was fear of danger.

The Haka : New Zealand

Traditionally danced both on the battlefield and when tribes came together peacefully, the Haka dance exists as a way for the Maori to display their tribe's "pride, strength and unity". During this dance, men fiercely stick their tongues out, stomp their feet, and slap their body to the rhythm of loud chanting in their native tongue.

Bharat Natyam : India

Bharat Natyam is one of the main classical Indian dances. Indigenous to the Tamilnadu region of India, this ancient dance is performed to express religious themes of Hinduism. Though this dance was originally reserved only for female temple dancers, in 1930 the Bharat Natyam began to be performed to the public.

Identify these Indian state dances :

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