
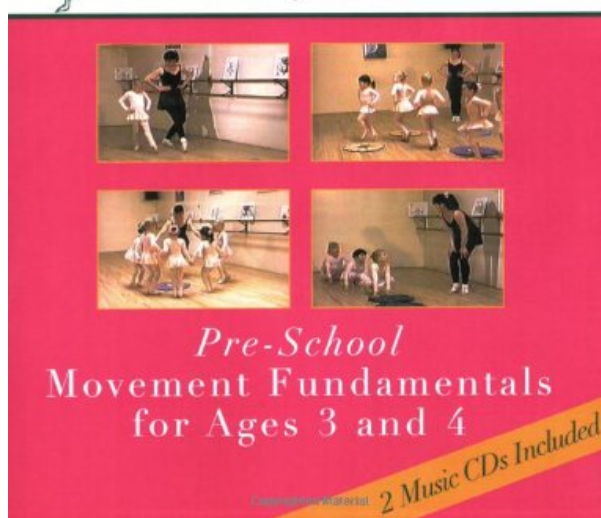


**BALLET BEGINNINGS FOR CHILDREN:
PRE-SCHOOL MOVEMENT
FUNDAMENTALS FOR AGES 3 AND 4 (BK. 1)
BY ROSEMARY BOROSS**

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**Ballet Beginnings
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Pre-School
Movement Fundamentals
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About the Author

Rosemary Boross is a dance teacher who presents workshops and seminars nationwide. She is the creator of videos such as *Dancing for Kids*, *Fantasy Garden Ballet Class I*, *Fantasy Garden Ballet Class II*, *I'm a Ballerina Now*, and *The Visual Dictionary of Ballet for Children*. She lives in Irvine, California.

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Exercises that assist basic motor development are at the core of this guide for dance teachers who prepare very young children for ballet classes. Teaching strategies are organized around a complete lesson plan for a Fantasy Garden pre-ballet class that includes warm-up exercises, creative movement, center work, and work across the floor. Children dance the parts of garden-dwelling characters such as Skippy the Squirrel and Plié the Poppy as well as Galloping Green Grasshoppers and Marching Marigolds, learning to keep their bodies disciplined even as their imaginations run wild. Photographs of children demonstrating movements are included, along with reproducible coloring pages, further ideas for games and props, and two audio CDs of music composed expressly for the Fantasy Garden lesson. The audio CDs are "A Fantasy Garden Ballet Class, Volume I" (60 minutes) and "A Fantasy Ballet Class, Volume II" (43 minutes).

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About the Author

Rosemary Boross is a dance teacher who presents workshops and seminars nationwide. She is the creator of videos such as Dancing for Kids, Fantasy Garden Ballet Class I, Fantasy Garden Ballet Class II, I'm a Ballerina Now, and The Visual Dictionary of Ballet for Children. She lives in Irvine, California.

Most helpful customer reviews

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

I agree, too advanced for small children

By Dena Landon

I am a dance teacher with several years experience. I bought this book/CD combination because I'm always looking for new ideas to enhance my classes for younger children (which can get repetitive). While many of Borross's ideas are interesting, and can be adapted, I found that the tempos of the music and time allotted for each exercise was completely out-of-whack with what is possible for 3-4 year olds.

For example, the Spider port de bras. The beginning, swaying arms is far too slow, but then the tempo speeds up to a ridiculously fast speed to rush through the basic arm movement. My children couldn't follow along! The butterfly song to stretch was two minutes of just the butterfly stretch. If the author teaches children of this age and can get them to follow along and *enjoy* these exercises (rather than frustrating them), then I'm impressed. Most of the exercises that I tried in my classes did not engage the students. Some of them (a ponche? with 3 year old's? really? An attitude? Good grief, you can't get their legs straight at this age!) are

completely inappropriate for this age group.

That said, the exercises can be adapted and used with older ages. Some can still be used with younger children, however, not enough of them to justify the expense of this book. If you're an experienced dance teacher I wouldn't expect this to give you a lot of new material, if you're a beginning teacher and you try to use this in a classroom expect tears and frustration (both yours and the students).

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

A solid manual, recommended for any instructor

By Midwest Book Review

Ballet can prove to be a great way to get exercise and learn coordination at any age, especially as young children. "Ballet Beginnings for Children: Pre-School Movement Fundamentals for Ages 3 and 4" is a guide for both parents and ballet instructors who deal with children. Formed from a master with many years of experience, Rosemary Boross imparts her wisdom onto readers and lays forth many proven teaching strategy. Enhanced with two CDs with music geared toward the age group doing ballet dancing, "Ballet Beginnings for Children" is a solid manual, recommended for any instructor.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Great Resource! - some exercises can be modified

By Zoe

I have been using this book for a little over a year in my pre-ballet classes and I have found it quite helpful for planning classes, building coordination, strength, and flexibility, and for introducing young children to the concepts of ballet. One of my classes comprises 4- and 5-year-olds (some were 3 when the class began), and the other class has kindergarten and first-graders, but I have found that the material is just as useful in the older group, perhaps more so, since they grasp the material more quickly. Personally I think it's a little weird to have a man's voice singing about flowers and bunnies in classes that consist of girls only (at least for me), but the girls love the music and I let them sing along as they do the exercises.

The book is very thorough in introducing teaching methods for young children, the components of a pre-ballet class, common mistakes to watch out for, step progressions, and creative ideas to make the classes more fun and interesting. The book is intended to be a complete curriculum and can be used as such. I do not use all of the material or use it exclusively, but it would be easy to do so.

I gave the book four stars instead of five for three reasons. First, some of the exercises as given are a little beyond a 3- or 4-year-old's ability in terms of tempo and combinations of steps. I have modified a few of the exercises (more so the centre floor exercises than the warm-up) to make them more appropriate for my students. I also have not been able to introduce all the exercises given in a single year for a class that meets once a week for 45 minutes or an hour.

Secondly, many or even most of the centre and allegro exercises are just too fast, regardless of age group. My firm belief is that movements should be learned and mastered at a slow tempo before they are done fast, and the exercises as written in this book often give absurdly fast timing, which in my experience, inevitably leads to the children just plain running or falling down and hurting themselves. So I do some of the steps at half-tempo where that is the case.

The third reason for the 4-star rating is terminology. A few of the songs use terms that I do not use in my classes, such as *coupé* and *passé* which, although used commonly in the US, are misnomers for *sur le cou-de-pied* and *retiré*, and I am particular about using the proper terms in my classes, so I just don't use one or two of the songs. I also don't use the *port de bras* music because it gives first through fifth positions of the arms (which can apply to either the Cecchetti or French school), and I teach the Vaganova method which

only has three arm positions; another studio where I teach pre-ballet uses the French terms for the arms (en bas, en avant, en haut, etc.) so I don't use the song for that class either, but someone who uses the French or Italian port de bras won't have that issue.

Overall I think this is a really useful book, especially for beginning teachers or teachers with little experience teaching young children, because you can follow the material to the letter and have a whole year's curriculum laid out, or you can just pick and choose exercises and use the book and CDs as inspiration for your own ideas. Either way I recommend it.

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