

SKATING VOCABULARY

How many languages do you speak? How many different ways are you able to communicate with another person? One of the essentials of good communication on any level is to have a broad understanding of vocabulary from which to draw.

The world of skating has its own vocabulary. A language of interesting moves, jumps, spins, steps which when they are all put together form skating as we know it.

We are all looking at ways in which to improve ourselves as skaters and our own skating vocabulary can be the key ingredient to moving to a higher point in ones career. Many times skaters will ask, “how should I prepare myself for this particular role or show?” or “how can I make myself more marketable with my skating?” A very general, but good rule of thumb is to have the broadest array of skating vocabulary. A choreographer that has a smorgasbord of elements from which to choose from will be able to create a much better finale product.

Here are some personal thoughts from choreographers in our business.

Chris Nolan - Associate Choreographer – Willy Bietak Productions
“Cool Art...Hot Ice”, “IceDancin” & “Ice Under the Big Top”

“Skating language is like any other language and the greater your vocabulary the better you will communicate. As a professional skater you communicate with other skaters, choreographers and most importantly the audience. Allow yourself to be open to learn, develop and expand your vocabulary”

Lisa-Marie Allen – Associate Choreographer
2002 Salt Lake Olympic Opening and Closing Ceremonies
PFSC Board Member

“In life and skating, there is one thought that has worked for me. With every step and every push off, always be prepared to learn something. Whether it comes from a choreographer, coach or rink rat, be observant and LEARN! Specialty tricks take a moment to learn and can truly enhance every aspect of your life and skating! Have fun.

Jamie Isley – Choreographer – “Stars on Ice”

“There is nothing more fabulous than working with talent with a broad vocabulary, or more discouraging than working with talent without. Quite recently I was on a job where 5 out of the 6 soloist had to finish their numbers with spins, not out of choice, but because they could not do stars, or butterflies or back flips.”

Robin Cousins – 1980 Olympic Gold Medalist
Holiday on Ice Director and Choreographer

“As a choreographer I can't stress enough how important it is to be able to work with skaters who understand what their blades are really for. Someone who understands the craft of figure skating. Jumping and spinning are great, but the triple lutz, double axel combo or an illusion spin that goes on for days will NOT guarantee the job anymore. There is so much more to be achieved and more and more, choreographers are looking for a diversity in skating styles, performers with character, a unique take on traditional skating styles and someone not afraid of experimenting with their blades. Not everyone can break out of the norm, but if you dare the results could be very interesting. Faced with the choice of yet another triple toe loop or a cantilever and footwork into a cartwheel I think I know where my choice would go!”

So the next time you are out practicing your craft and your enthusiasm is lacking, take some time to focus on the choreographic elements that link and elevate a mediocre performance to that of an individual who gets the crowd on their feet!

By Sylvia Froescher