



# ARTISTRY IN MOTION

## ASPIRE TO CREATIVITY

**MISSION STATEMENT: Artistry in Motion (AIM)** is designed to educate skaters on the basic principles and philosophy of ice choreography and to give them a foundation in basic body alignment, movement and line. Artistry in Motion Aspire connects technique to artistry and artistry to technique.

The AIM program puts an emphasis on body movements and body line by achieving full extension and complete use of the entire body through all three program components: composition, presentation and skating skills.

By incorporating Artistry in Motion in conjunction with the Aspire Program, athletes will achieve a complete training package both on and off the ice.

### **Skaters will achieve artistry through movement of their entire body while executing elements and skating skills of the skater's level:**

- Head** – Define movement by creating different focus points: erect, raised, turn, incline, lower
- Shoulders** – Horizontal and vertical movement creating the impetus to line and torso extension
- Arms** – Incorporated into figure skating choreography, speed and line
- Torso** – The key to both technique and artistry – the link to all body movement
- Legs** – Stroking, steps, edges, line, extension, spirals and connecting movements
- Feet** – flexibility and strength needed for extension and to prevent overuse and injury

### **BASIC CLASS MANAGEMENT:**

Class instructors should possess a strong background or talent in dance, music and/or choreography. They should possess excellent communication skills and be able to comfortably communicate figure skating and the importance of artistry to movements. Concentration is on music, movement, rhythm, interpretation and skating. This program is customizable to both on- and off-ice classes.

### **NOTES FOR THE INSTRUCTOR:**

- Decide if this will be run on or off the ice (or both)
- Prepare a lesson plan for the session of classes
- Choreograph: Choreographic step sequence consisting of any kind of movements like steps, turns, spirals, arabesques, spread eagles, Ina Bauers, hydroblades, etc.
- Have necessary supplies available (paper, pens, markers, etc.)
- Utilize visual references when available (e.g., PaulaWagener.com, Peacock, YouTube)

### **TRILOGY OF MOVEMENT**

The ABC's are important when it comes to Artistry in Motion. Those ABC's are:

**A**RTISTIC MOVEMENT  
**B**ODY ALIGNMENT  
THROUGH  
**C**HOREOGRAPHY

# ARTISTRY IN MOTION ASPIRE PROGRAM FORMAT

As a continuation of the Artistry in Motion Learn to Skate USA program, the Artistry in Motion Aspire program begins to incorporate the three program components into the skater's technique. This necessary and foundational training can take place in a group, semi-private or private lesson format (both on and off the ice).

The Artistry in Motion Aspire Program is primarily focused on the Pre-Free Skate to pre-juvenile skater but can easily be implemented at all levels in a skater's journey from Learn to Skate USA to the senior excel and senior well-balanced levels. This program is both level and lesson-based, using choreographic exercise as a backbone to creativity that will grow with the needs of the figure skater.

## HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM:

1. Analyze your program's and/or skaters' needs and choose one of the three Artistry in Motion lessons to deliver.
2. Create a lesson based on the three program components (composition, presentation and skating skills)  
See below for a description of each.
3. Use the Artistry in Motion Aspire lesson components as your guideline or template for each of your lessons.

## PROGRAM COMPONENTS FOR SINGLES AND PAIRS:

Composition	Presentation	Skating Skills
The intentional, developed and / or original arrangement of the repertoire of all types of movements into a meaningful whole according to the principles of proportion, unity, space, pattern and musical structure.	The demonstration of engagement, commitment and involvement based on an understanding of the music and composition.	The ability of the Skater to execute the skating repertoire of steps, turns and skating movements with blade and body control.
Unity	Expressiveness & projection	Variety of edges, steps, turns, movements and directions
Connections between and within the elements	Variety and contrast of energy and of movements	Clarity of edges, steps, turns, movements and body control
Pattern and ice coverage	Musical sensitivity and timing	Balance and glide
Multidimensional movements and use of space	Unison, oneness and awareness of space (Pair Skating, Ice Dance, Synchronized Skating)	Flow
Choreography reflecting musical phrase and form		Power and speed

## ARTISTRY IN MOTION LESSON:

### THE COMPOSITION LESSON

**FOCUS:** Teaching the athlete to skate fluid and controlled movements designed in relation to music. Elements should be fully connected with varied body and skating movements through space and be in different patterns and varied placement on the ice. Through choreography the skater reaches inside to express and emote a feeling through movements and elements corresponding to musical phrases and forms.

**GOAL:** Gradual progression of composition to music combined with progressive skating skills.

Coaches should choreograph their own performance exercises utilizing the following required elements:

- Storytelling
- Characterization
- Emotional reaction
- Line into electric skating
- Ice utilization and audience relatability
- Interpretation to music expression

## ARTISTRY IN MOTION LESSON:

### THE PRESENTATION LESSON

**FOCUS:** Giving the skaters permission to skate outside their boxes and never be afraid to explore their own innate creativity, translate the rhythm of the music and express the character that they are portraying through the movements that are being created on the ice. Always remember that beautiful presentation is linked to beautiful skating technique as well as interpretation. You can't truly have one without the other.

**GOAL:** Teaching the skaters to simply love the athletes that they are becoming.

Required elements: skating skills, transitions, port de bras, connecting steps, spins, jumps, step sequences.

Coaches should interpret their own exercises through choreography using the following required elements:

- Rhythm, tempo and musical nuance
- Legato, staccato, marcato, adagio, allegro
- Opening position, eye contact, body awareness, no skating
- Utilizing the emotional building of music

### THE SKATING SKILLS LESSON

**FOCUS:** Teaching the skater correct use of edges, clean circles, knee bend and extension. The process dictates the result. Do not settle for mediocre emphasis.

**GOAL:** The skater should fully understand the marriage of artistry and technique.

Coaches should choreograph their own skating skill exercises using the following elements: crossovers, stroking, mohawks, turns and connecting steps; begin introducing difficult turns that are found in higher levels including brackets, Choctaws, counters, rockers, brackets, twizzles, loops, etc.

## ARTISTRY IN MOTION LESSON:

### BUILDING YOUR CLASS

When running the Artistry in Motion Aspire Program, an instructor should consider the following when building a lesson plan:

1. The class that you will be running (composition, presentation, skating skills)
2. Skill level of skater (Pre-Free Skate to pre-juvenile)
3. Type of class (group, semi-private, one-day, weekly, semester, etc.)
4. Incorporate the following lessons to the class that you will be running (for example, run a skating skills class that focuses on emotional connection or a presentation class focusing on musical interpretation)

### LESSONS TO INCORPORATE IN YOUR CLASS

#### EMOTIONAL CONNECTION AND IMAGERY

##### KNOWLEDGE AND DEMONSTRATION OF EMOTIONAL CONNECTION:

Happy	Furious	Silly	Frightened
Surprised	Loving	Flirting	Overjoyed
Funny	Sad	Shy	Contemplative
Thoughtful	Excited	Gentle	Hysterical
Cagey	Angry	Pensive	Curious

## ARTISTRY IN MOTION LESSON:

### SUGGESTED EXERCISES:

- Bring a mirror to class. Have the skaters practice facial/emotional expressions in front of the mirror. Remove the mirror and have them practice their facial/emotional expressions without it. Notice the difference. Are they as expressive without the mirror? They should be. If mirrors are unavailable use the plexiglass around the rink.
- Have skaters use a peer as a mirror and repeat the exercise.

### EMOTIONAL IMAGERY

Using imagery in figure skating goes hand-in-hand with the philosophy of storytelling. To tell a story well, you need to become the character, and you need to become the story. Integrating the storyline into choreography on the ice, and using your body, edges, turns, etc., to tell the story will make the program. Storytelling and imagery involve strong skating skills and not just "facial expressions" and "arm movements."

#### HOW DO WE CREATE THIS THEORY OF IMAGERY AND STORYTELLING THROUGH SKATING SKILLS?

- Knee bend (varying depths and rhythm)
- Creating shapes with your upper body (circles, body levels, shoulder involvement)
- Height and direction of free leg
- Syncopation of movement
- Using rhythm to create movement to create a story

#### TIPS FOR TEACHING YOUR SKATERS:

- If it's a known story, then educate your skaters on the story.
- If there is no "known" story, create one. Poll your skaters to see the story that comes to their minds – remember every person will have a different twist on the same piece of music.
- Select "eye focus" points throughout the arenas so that skaters have "spotted" points of focus throughout their program.
- If your skaters are having difficulty using imagery, have them practice with the real thing — real ribbon, real cymbals, etc. When they feel comfortable with the real thing, encourage them to practice imagery slowly.

### DANCE MOVEMENT

#### KNOWLEDGE AND DEMONSTRATION OF DANCE MOVEMENTS SUCH AS:

Extension	Stretch	Flexion	Body rolls
Obtuse	Lean	Arabesque	Body waves
Symmetry	Down	Reach	Bending
Shake	Gallop	Point	Pointing
Bend	Point	Darting	Twisting
Up	Curve	Stretching	Retire
Flex	Contraction	Reaching	Barrel turn

#### KNOWLEDGE AND DEMONSTRATION OF BALLET ICE MOVEMENT:

Plié	Sauté
Port de bras	Arabesque
Degage	Attitude

## ARTISTRY IN MOTION LESSON:

### SUGGESTED EXERCISES:

- Explain that “plié” means “to bend” and continue that process with all ballet terms. Relate them to skating. When do we plié in skating?
- Translate the plié into skating through the relationship between stroking, landing positions, etc. How many pliés are there in one back crossover?
- Take a forward outside spiral and come up with 15 different port de bras to do with it (i.e., swinging one arm, circling both arms, sharp movements with both arms, moving just the right wrist in an inward, outward, both hands behind the head, one hand behind the head, smooth arm movements, quick arm movements, etc.).
- The idea is to relate basic ballet steps to skating. We want the skaters to realize the importance of the relationship between ballet and skating while in their own environment.

### KNOWLEDGE AND DEMONSTRATION OF CONTEMPORARY ICE MOVEMENT:

Inversions	Soar	Descending
Battement	Darting	Horizontal
Contraction	Along	Parallel
Roll	Ascending	
Lift	Vertical	

### SKATERS SHOULD SHOW COMPREHENSION OF DANCE STEPS ON THE ICE RELATED TO SKATING SKILLS

(these steps can be used as interesting transitions, particularly in a step sequence):

**Jeté** — stretched low, jump to side

**Hitch Kick** — two-legged kick on ice; syncopated movement

**Pulse** — on-ice choreographic gradual movement

**Rotation** — spin exercises and jump rotation

**Grand Battement** — split jump, flexibility moves, spirals

**Rond de jambe** — fan kicks, fan spirals

**Chaine** — connecting steps, small turns, varied tempo changes

**Pique** — connecting steps, small turns, varied tempo changes

**Glissade** — small side extended hop as connecting transitional step

## MUSICAL INTERPRETATION

### INTRODUCE THE SKATERS TO MUSIC AS A CHOREOGRAPHIC IMPETUS:

Teach the skaters to count music, use 3/4, 2/4 and 4/4 tempos, with and without music. Also use acapella through movement only; skaters aim to become the music physically through movement, rhythm and skating. You may incorporate the musical terminology below to help create movement over the blade, keeping program components in mind.

Melody	Mezzo	Dynamics
Tempo	Piano	Staccato
Adagio	Staccato	Adagio
Allegro	Mezzo legato	Allegro
Legato	Mezzo piano	Syncopation
Forte	Rhythmic modes	

### SUGGESTED EXERCISES:

- Remember to also speak in musical terminology. Demonstrate forte by speaking LOUDLY! Legato by speaking v..e..r..y..s..l..o..w..l..y. Using your voice as a tool, give the skaters a lasting mental image of the terminology.
- Accentuate musical terminology through verbal and physical demonstration. Besides playing music, think of all the additional ways you can relate sound and the feelings behind it to your skaters. Have them recognize the feeling of momentum they gain through energy generated from music and sound.

## ARTISTRY IN MOTION LESSON:

### UNDERSTANDING OF THE MUSICAL GENRES BELOW:

Jazz	Street	Soul	Country Western
Blues	Cha-Cha	Ragtime	Reggae
Classical	Contemporary	Rock and Roll	Rumba
Opera	New Age	Tango	Jazz
Ballroom	Rap	Salsa	

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF MUSICAL PERIODS:

Romanticism	Contemporary
Neoclassicism	Classical
Baroque	Impressionism

### UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THEME AND VARIATION IN TERMS OF INTERPRETATION:

**YOUR MISSION:** The theme is the storytelling part of the program; the focus is the character portrayed on the ice.

**SUGGESTED EXERCISES:** (use your imagination to create your own!)

**Mirror exercise** — skaters pair off and mirror each other's movements

**Interactive pairs** — skaters move based on impulsive energy and finish the emotional movement of the skater prior (this is also effective in groups)

**Sentence** — skaters pair off. The first skater begins the choreography; the second skater completes it (like a sentence)

**Solo** — (1.5 minutes) have the skater start in center ice; begin acapella. Ask the skater to choose an emotion and tell a story using skating skills and body movement. At the halfway mark, begin music and finish the program with music

Begin mentioning various composers and periods in which they lived. Bring a familiar piece of music from the composer to class with you. Ask skaters to look at their home music library and see what music they choose. Try to stay away from popular music. The idea is to expand skaters' musical horizons.

## OPERA AND FIGURE SKATING

Opera originated in Italy at the end of the 16th century. When we talk about "storytelling" through our program components we can trace this philosophy back to the origins of opera.

The use of beloved operatic pieces for figure skating has been a longstanding tradition in figure skating, but it is so much more than just beautiful music that has been proven to "skate well."

The operatic term "libretto" means "small book." What a perfect connection to both our short and long program and the storytelling emphasis of our program components.

Traditional opera consists of two modes of singing: recitative and aria. The recitative passages of the opera are designed to mimic speech and is plot driven. The arias are designed to express emotions in a structured melodic style. Both modes are obviously valuable to figure skating choreography, and if structured thoughtfully, could lend itself to compelling choreography.

### CLASSICAL MUSIC

What originally began as a reaction to baroque music, classical music was music composed between 1750-1820. Well-known composers include Mozart, Hayden and Beethoven. If you choose to read more about the structure and history of classical music, you will see many similarities of vocabulary with figure skating. Such words as structural integrity, components, notes relating to each other — there are interesting similarities between the composition of classical music and the composition of a figure skating program. Storytelling in classical music called conflict/resolution is quite apropos (melodic counterpart).

### CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

Contemporary music denotes a time period rather than a style of music. In very general terms it is music composed in the 20th and 21st centuries; therefore, it has a vast scope. Another definition is that it is music that breaks the 19th century heritage of music.

Because of the vastness of the definition of contemporary music, there are a volume of musical choices. Many show tunes and popular music are great for the beginning skater. Lighthearted with a strong beat, these

## ARTISTRY IN MOTION LESSON:

pieces lend themselves well to the elementary introduction to interpretation, storytelling and performance as they are easy to understand and traditionally upbeat with a steady repetitive rhythm. This music is usually very audience-friendly and beloved by many.

### SUGGESTED EXERCISES:

- Teach the steps (choreographic or leveled) of this level in partners and small groups. Constantly set the steps to music. Encourage use of body levels and elements from previous levels.
- After performance of step (choreographic or leveled), analyze what dance steps are done in each section. Take each section and set it to different pieces of music, using the same steps each time.

## SHAPES THROUGH SPACE

Encourage skaters to understand the concept of and demonstrate with their own bodies the following shapes with both their edges (ice tracings) and body movement over the blade. You may perform these individually or with partners, each time creating an ice sculpture on the ice.

Circle	Diagonal	Curve
Straight line	Triangle	Dot
Half-circle	Rectangle	Oval

### SUGGESTED EXERCISES:

- Allow the skaters to experience making shapes with their bodies while moving, gliding and standing still. Think about all the different ways there are to glide. Forward, backward, on two feet, on one foot, one knee, the free leg at retire, the free foot stretched, in attitude, leg shaking, etc. Let your imagination run wild. Remember, there are no limitations on creativity.
- Teach skaters the value of pattern in choreography. Have them stroke in visual patterns such as zigzag, tulip, ball, etc.

## MOVEMENT MODALITIES

Knowledge and demonstration of head movements:

Up	Head roll
Down	Tilt
Turn	Creative body slides
Incline	

Skaters must choreograph a 1.5-minute program using three of the below dance movements while skating:

Plié	Battu
Rond de jambe	Échappé
Battement	Jeté

### SUGGESTED EXERCISES:

- Discuss the five basic body levels: ice, knee, hips, shoulders, infinity. Remember that these levels are 360 degrees and therefore have infinite energy around them. Also, the degree of energy does not need to be uniform; the energy can have high and lows and "spikes."
- Have the skaters demonstrate the five body levels.
- Relate the levels to skating movement and choreography. Encourage the skaters to create their own moves on different body levels. Stress level 0, on the ice.
- Have the skaters feel comfortable with the feelings of recklessness in choreography.
- Have them repeat the exercise using jumps and spins.
- They must learn to feel a sense of body line at various angles in relationship to their skating. Movement at different levels is required to gain knowledge; there are no rights or wrongs in creative movement.

# VISION BOARD

This is a movement and skating based program; therefore, it is very visual and subjective. Encourage your skaters to download the vision board app. It's a wonderful way for them to create their own vision boards of movement and artistry. They can take their programs, goals, Google art, music and dance and explore so many new arenas of creativity.

Coaches can use this app to plan their classes and share vision boards of their AIM program. The sky's the limit! If your skaters cannot access this app, use the following worksheet to print:

## VISION BOARD DIRECTIONS

### 1. CREATE A THEME

Possible themes: Composition • Presentation • Skating Skills

### 2. HOW WILL I ACHIEVE THE THEME OF MY VISION BOARD?

#### SET - SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM GOALS.

Possible themes:

Creating continuity of movement from element to element by utilizing balletic movement








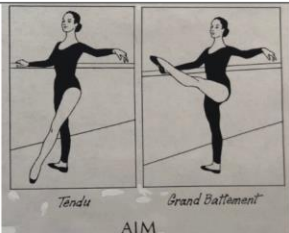

Project through better facial expression

Create a step with an interesting pattern

Double the beat of my step to a piece of music

### 3. HAVE FUN!

This is your vision.

 <p>Goal Date _____</p> <p>Goal _____</p>	 <p>Goal Date _____</p> <p>Goal _____</p>	 <p>Goal Date _____</p> <p>Goal _____</p>
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# ABOUT THE CREATOR

## PAULA WAGENER BLONDER

Copyrighted in 1992, Artistry in Motion (AIM) is a coaching and choreography course to develop figure skaters' artistry. In 2000, U.S. Figure Skating adopted the program into its Basic Skills program, and today it has been restructured for the Learn to Skate USA program. AIM has reached more than 450,000 figure skaters and has expanded into competitive figure skaters' and instructors' education, and I am constantly evolving the program for the needs of figure skaters and their coaches. Throughout my career, I have traveled extensively with my Artistry in Motion workshops and off-ice program, working with skaters of all levels across the globe.

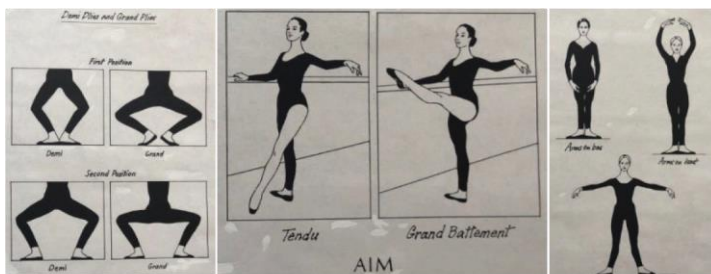
In 2018, AIM launched its new website, PaulaWagener.com. Additional resources can be found on this site, and it continues to expand its platform and all it has to offer. I am excited to begin offering several new services both on and off the ice as well as online, and I'm also excited to be a part of U.S. Figure Skating's Aspire program!

Each skater has his or her own very special qualities, and my goal is to enhance what's inside of each and every skater, regardless of level, and lay the foundation for success. Our job as instructors and choreographers is to establish a comfortable and nurturing educational environment in which skaters can flourish and become the best that they can be and be confident enough to just "Show Up and Be You!"

Additional resources can be found at PaulaWagener.com:

AIM Curriculum, AIM Workshops, Rink Tank Interactive Skate Coach App Series for Artistry in Motion, AIM Instructors Education, Inside Skating Events, AIM TalentSkate

For both taped classes and live classes with Paula visit PaulaWagener.com



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