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[People Working, Robots Dancing!](#)

A robot's ballet

The Japanese... robots... and dance! And now let's try to make a sentence out of it. I know that everybody thinks about the same thing now: the Japanese are dancing the way robots do. This is partly true but it would be more accurate to say that robots are dancing like the Japanese and this because some Japanese researches, in their attempt to preserve some old, dying folkdances, put some robots at work (dance). The robot registered the movements of an old folk dancer and then reproduced them or at it least it did its best. The robot (or maybe we should call it dancebot, as robot is a Czech word coined by Karel Capek in the play R.U.R. (1920), deriving from robot-, as in robota, compulsory labor) is 1,5 metre tall and danced pretty well despite its "Terminator" aspect. It was very lifelike as you can see by yourself [here](#). The dancebot - named HRP-2 - or Promet was "taught" to dance by using video captured sequences which were eventually converted into limb movements. "They have got it to directly copy human movements. That is very difficult because the joints of the robot are very different from the joints of a human," explained Noel Sharkey, a robotics expert at Sheffield University. Despite its lifelike performance, HRP- 2 has as any beginner some problems with the complicated leg movements. Meaning that aside from the simple lift of the foot any other more demanding movement can end up in a total crash on the dance floor. The balance is a problem for the dancebot and we all know how hard it is sometimes. Moreover, as researchers said, HRP- 2 isn't an intelligent robot: it only reproduces some registered movements like all the impossible dancers we saw trying very hard. So teaching robots how to dance in order for them to be able to teach humans how to dance isn't actually the best idea. Dance is after all like many other things a very 'human affair' and robots can only do wrong where most of the humans also do wrong. I don't want to see or imagine The Swan Lake ballet performed by robots. Dancing is for people, working is for robots.