

TAP KIDS STUDY GUIDE

Suggested Reading:

Brotherhood in Rhythm: The Jazz Tap Dancing of the Nicholas Brothers

By Constance Valis Hill

The Souls of Your Feet

By Acia Gray

Tap! - The Greatest Tap dance Stars and their stories

by Rusty Frank

Jazz Dance

by Jean & Marshall Stearns - An excellent source of historical information on tap dance and its heyday.

The Tap Dance Dictionary

By Mark Knowles

Savion! My Life in Tap.

(2000) NY:HarperCollins.

Black Dance in America: a History Through its People.

Haskins, James (1990)

Recommended Videos

The Magic of Honi Coles - A PBS presentation produced by Susan Pollard

Tap Dance in America - A PBS presentation hosted by the late great Gregory Hines.

Stormy Weather - Hollywood Classic featuring breathtaking dance numbers of the Nicholas Brothers

Masters of Tap features Chuck Green, Will Gaines, and a Honi Coles, 61 minutes of lore on bebop and rhythm tap, including a master class with Honi Coles, recorded in London in 1983. Rare footage of the masters. Publisher

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HOME VISION (TEL: 800-262-8600)

That's Entertainment Collection - Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra, Esther Williams and Fred Astaire are just a few of the 125 stars showcased. This collection includes lavish production numbers from over 100 MGM musicals, and behind-the-scenes footage and out-takes that never made it onto the big screen. That's More Entertainment! hosted by Michael Feinstein, features unreleased musical numbers. 8 hours 6 minutes on four videocassettes. (* All MGM Compilations. Available commercially for rental or purchase [MULTD].)

About Tap: (28 min, color. 1985) Hosted by Gregory Hines, focusing on the artistry and style of some of America's leading male tap dancers. Direct Cinema Ltd. ,P.O. Box 69799 , Los Angeles, CA 90069

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES:

www.newyorkstage.com - click on Tap Kids and meet the stars of the show

www.ita.org

www.tapdance.org

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HISTORY

The early slave trade in America resulted in a rhythmic collision of cultures. Slaveholders already fearful of revolt began to panic when it was discovered that Africans could communicate with each other - over long distances and in code - through the use of drums. All over the South, slave-holders forbid the use of drums and other native

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instruments in African religious ceremonies. African-Americans held on to their traditional rhythms by transferring them to their feet. The tapping out of complex rhythmic passages was developed, and a subtle, intricate and vital physical code of expression was born. In 1845, the potato famine in Ireland caused thousands of Irish families to flee their county. They landed in New York City, their port of entry, and settled in the notorious Five Points neighborhood. They shared their decrepit living spaces with black families, and shared their favorite pastimes; singing, dancing, and music. Tap Dance and Clogging share deep roots. The most difficult of the clogs are the Jigs and Hornpipes. In some of these the feet can tap the floor more than seventy times in fifteen seconds. In clog dancing, no thought is given to the upper body. Almost rigid -- the shoulders and the arms are kept motionless. By the mid-nineteenth century, African-American footwork, body and arm movements had combined with Irish and British clogging steps. They incorporated a syncopated beat to create a style called "buck and wing." which became Modern Tap Dance. Modern tap dancing continued to evolve through the years 1900 to 1930. William Henry Lane was a young black man who studied with an Irishman, William Lowe, a master of the jig. Lane became known for his style, skill, and brilliance at performing. In 1844, he and another dancer, Irish-American John Diamond were each paid the enormous sum of \$500 to compete against each other in three challenge matches. The first match was declared a draw, and after the second and third competition, Master Juba, as Lane was then known, was declared King of All Dancers.

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A SHORT LIST OF FAMOUS TAP DANCERS

Don't let the list end here, there are so many more! From Fred Astaire to Gregory Hines and Gene Kelly to Honi Coles

Bill "Bojangles" Robinson

Bill Robinson was brought up by his grandmother after the death of his parents when he was still a baby. He was christened Luther, a name he did not like, so he suggested to his younger brother Bill that they should exchange names. When Bill objected, Luther applied his fists, and the exchange was made! (The new 'Luther' later adopted the name Percy and became a well-known drummer.) At the age of six he began dancing for a living, appearing as a "hooper," or song-and-dance man. Robinson eschewed the frenetic manner of the jitterbug; his dancing always remained cool and reserved, rarely using his upper body and depending on his busy, inventive feet and his expressive face.

Willie Covan (The Four Covans)

Willie started out at the age of six as a "pickaninny", a child between the ages of six and twelve who performed as a corps of backup dancers for a woman singer. He never took a dance class in his life, but rose to the pinnacle of all vaudeville entertainment-dancing at the Palace Theatre.

Peg Leg Bates

Mr. Bates lost his leg at the age of twelve working in a cottonseed gin. In spite of never having formally studied dance, he went on to a distinguished career in tap dancing, performing in Paris, top Harlem nightclubs, and on Ed Sullivan's television show.

Fayard and Harold Nicholas (The Nicholas Brothers)

The Nicholas' show stopping act was distinguished from other child acts of the day by their grace, agility, and sophistication. In addition to being the show-stopping act at the Cotton Club from 1932-1939, they appeared in more than fifty Hollywood movies.

Shirley Temple

Shirley Temple made her first movie appearance at the age of six. Her fame was colossal, and within a year she was the number one box office star. She tapped in many films, often with another veteran tapper, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson.

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Savion Glover

Savion is one of the youngest men to be nominated for a Tony Award for his performance in **Black and Blue**. He made his Broadway debut as the title character in **The Tap Dance Kid** at the age of 12. In 1996, Savion won the Tony award for his dancing and choreography of the Broadway smash-hit, **Bring In Da Noise, Bring In Da Funk**.