Exploring dance: An outline for the study of dance appreciation with suggested films

Jacque J Jaeger

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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Exploring dance: An outline for the study of dance appreciation with suggested films

Jaeger, Jacque J., M.A.
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EXPLORING DANCE: AN OUTLINE FOR
THE STUDY OF DANCE APPRECIATION
WITH SUGGESTED FILMS

by
Jacque J. Jaeger

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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The thesis of Jacque J. Jaeger for the degree of Master of Music in Dance is approved.

Chairperson, Carole Rae, Ph.D.

Examiner Committee Member, Beth Mehovic, Ph.D.

Examiner Committee Member, Isabelle Emerson, Ph.D.

Graduate Faculty Representative, Cathie Kelly, Ph.D.

Graduate Dean, Ronald W. Smith, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

Exploring Dance: An Outline for the Study of Dance Appreciation with Suggested Films surveys the history of dance genres--ballet, ballroom, tap, and jazz--used in film musicals. Dance creators, their contributions to the development of the art, as well as the salient characteristics of each period, from the earliest known records to the present, are discussed. Each section concludes with an analysis of the function of dance in selected films.

Chapter I outlines the history of ballet from the Renaissance through the twentieth century. One film, Dancers, with a ballet representative of the Romantic period, and two films with contemporary ballet, The Red Shoes and Oklahoma!, are examined. Chapter II chronicles ballroom dancing from the fourteenth to the twentieth century. The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle, a film about the celebrated early twentieth-century dancing couple, is discussed. Chapter III traces the evolution of tap dance from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. That's Dancing, with its numerous tap dancers and diversity of styles, is examined. Chapter IV outlines the growth of jazz dance from the early eighteenth century to the present and analyzes the film West Side Story, which is representative of mid-twentieth century jazz dance style.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In Exploring Dance: An Outline for the Study of Dance Appreciation with Suggested Films, I make no new discoveries nor do I state any arguments against existing scholarship. Many books have been written about dance; thirty-seven thousand exist in the New York Public Library. Even with a great many books on hand, gathering historical information on dance can be a frustrating and tedious task. I found a plausible answer to why this is so in an article by Claudia Roth Pierpont in the August 20, 1990, issue of The New Yorker. Ms. Pierpont writes of the thirty-seven thousand books, "Whatever is in all those books? Shake them out and you would accumulate one small mound of method, one alpine peak of gossip and, running between, a meandering stream of metaphysics. This is the long-familiar landscape of dance history."¹ In addition to this dilemma, I found in my research that many books concentrate on only one or two artistic styles and quite a few take quantum leaps back and forth through history, which makes it difficult for the reader, with little knowledge of dance, to follow. A natural, valuable, and clarifying companion to dance books is the film video. Not as abundant, but steadily increasing in number,
dance videos provide visual documentation of the most ephemeral of arts. What I have tried to compile in one manuscript is an overview of the history of all the dance genres—ballet, ballroom, tap, and jazz—used in their pure form in musicals. After I lay historical foundations, dance creators, their innovations and contributions to the development of the art are discussed. Full-length films representative of each artistic style are also examined.

Dance history, unlike world history, often has no clear linear progressions or exact dates. Dates of stylistic changes overlap and blend from one period to the next. In dance, unless a specific event is publicly critiqued or a dated libretto or program found, time is approximate.

Chapter I outlines the history of ballet from the pre-classic dances of the Renaissance to the ballets of the twentieth century. Ballet has the most information available for the professional researcher or dance devotee. Perhaps this is because it originally was performed by the nobility, who had the education and means to record their court entertainment. Even so, epochs overlap, and no clear lines of demarcation are available to define the evolution of each specific ballet period. Two of ballet’s four periods are examined in the following three films: Giselle, which is seen in the film Dancers, exemplifies the Romantic Period; The Red Shoes has the celebrated Contemporary Period ballet, "The Red Shoes;" and a Contemporary Period dream ballet is reviewed in
Chapter II chronicles ballroom history from the pastoral chain dances of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to the rebellious, sexual dances of the twentieth century. Historical research on the history of ballroom dance is scant. The most detailed information can be gleaned from fourteenth to nineteenth century documentation. By the sixteenth and through the eighteenth century, ballroom dance paralleled pre-classic ballet. In the seventeenth-and eighteenth-century social dance manuals of Pierre Rameau and R. A. Feuillet—replicas of which are available today—specific steps, styles, and manners appropriate to social dance’s lofty societal position were described. Nineteenth century records, too, give the reader an idea of the history and evolution of the newly favored waltz. Dates and information about early- and mid-twentieth century ballroom dancing are meager and repetitive. Information can be found about the Charleston, Fox Trot, and a few early Ragtime dances in numerous books; and there is repetitive information about the Rock ‘n’ Roll era and the Twist. Late twentieth-century literature is sparse, and much of what is available is written by writers in Great Britain and addresses events that happened there. One film is commented upon, The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle. This recounts the social and professional lives of the foremost dancing couple of the early twentieth century.

Chapter III traces the evolution of tap dance from the
eighteenth through the twentieth century. Even less information is available to the reader about tap history—the most informative book found is Marshall and Jean Stearns Jazz Dance: The Story of American Vernacular Dance. Why would there be so little information? Perhaps because tap dance is a younger art form than ballet and ballroom or because the roots of tap lie in the dances of average immigrants and plantation slaves. These early tappers did not have the facilities to record their dances nor did they realize their innovations would have historic value. One film, That’s Dancing, with its numerous performers will be examined.

Chapter IV outlines jazz dance’s growth from the eighteenth through the twentieth century. Jazz dance resources, too, are few. The roots of jazz, the newest dance style, are closely linked with tap, most likely because both used syncopation. After jazz evolved into a style of its own, it paralleled ballroom dance styles. One film, West Side Story, is analyzed. The dances are representative of mid-twentieth century jazz dance style.

Within the limited scope of this work, I have attempted to give a coherent, chronological overview of dance history. Not all the important events or prominent artists could be included. In some cases, stress was placed on early events; and in other instances, artists’ works that could be recreated in films and analyzed were stressed.
NOTES


CHAPTER II

BALLET

During the Renaissance, court masques were popular throughout Europe. At these fêtes there were myriad unrelated spectacles such as equestrian performances (carousels), processions both on land and sea, fireworks, stage machines, tableaux vivants on triumphal cars, declamation, singing, and dancing. The dances, known as ballets, were the social basse dances of the period, which were performed by noblemen and women—the most renowned of which were the Italian dancers. It is not surprising, then, that a Florentine woman should be credited with producing the first and most well-known ballet de cour (court ballet).¹

When Catherine de Medici traveled from Florence in 1533 to France to wed Henri Valois, Duc L’Orange, she brought her dancers with her to entertain at the French Court.² By 1541, when Henri became king, court spectacles had become extremely elaborate and were produced not only to entertain but also to glorify the ruler, politically educate the audience, and commemorate an important event, such as a marriage.

When the queen’s sister, Margaret of Lorraine, married the Duc de Joyeuse, Catherine asked her Italian dancing master, Baldassarino de Belgiojose, known as Beaujoyeulx, to
create an evening of entertainment. On October 15, 1581, in the Salle de Bourbon of the Louvre, Beaujoyeulx's ballet, the Ballet Comique de la Reine was performed to commemorate the royal union. For the first time, dance and music were used successfully to convey a unified dramatic theme.²

Though adhering to a coherent dramatic idea, the Ballet Comique de la Reine did not resemble a professional ballet performance of today. The stage was not elevated, nor was there a proscenium arch; rather, the five-hour ballet took place on the floor of the ballroom, with the audience seated on three sides of the hall. The performance was directed to the "presence," King Henri III, and his mother Catherine, the queen. They, with other members of the royal family, sat at one end of the room while the remainder of the audience, whose view diminished in order of rank, sat in tiered galleries along the remaining two sides of the room.

The point of departure for the Ballet Comique de la Reine was the Circe myth from Homer's Odyssey. In the myth Ulysses triumphs over the evils of the enchantress, Circe, who, eventually, bears his children, the Four Seasons. The political message of the ballet, of course, was the value of a politically and religiously worthy marriage, with power returned to the sovereign. All of the conventions and allusions were easily understood.

Jacques Patin designed the sets and costumes for the Ballet Comique and rendered the etchings in what is the first,
full libretto published for a ballet. Patin’s set pieces included Circe’s palace, a forest for Pan, and a mound of clouds; when needed, cars carried additional scenery and performers into the hall. The costumes were contemporary attire: the men wore tight-fitting hose, a jerkin, and a cloak; the noble ladies’ gowns were made of fine cloths of silver and gold embellished with precious jewels.

The Ballet Comique began with recitation, songs, and processions, after which the first dance was performed. It consisted of geometrical patterns performed by the ladies of the court. Another patterned dance was performed, then the grand ballet concluded the performance. In the grand ballet the dancers, including the queen, performed dances utilizing forty geometrical floor patterns. The evening’s revelry ended with the guests--and it was estimated there were between nine and ten thousand--dancing with the costumed performers.

King Louis XIII perpetuated the custom of the court ballet. Louis authored both narrative and music for many ballets; he also enjoyed performing with his all male company. Women at this time did not appear in grotesque ballets nor in ballets in which the king and his company appeared; rather, females’ roles were danced by courtiers en travesti.

The king most well-known for his association with ballet during the seventeenth century is Louis XIV (1643-1715). Louis gave generously of his time, talent, and finances; and, during his reign, the buds of ballet that had formed in the
previous centuries came to fruition. Louis was a handsome man whose life was inextricably entwined with dance. He appeared for the first time as a dancer in 1651 in *Le Ballet de Cassandre*. He acquired his well-known appellation, *Le Roi de Soleil*, the Sun King, in 1653, when he appeared as the Rising Sun in *Le Ballet Royal de la Nuit*.9

*Le Ballet Nuit* alluded to Revolutionary struggles in a way that was readily understood. Robbers, hidden by the darkness of night, dare to sack a burning building. Aurora, the goddess of dawn, escorted by the Rising Sun, Honor, Victory, and other Virtues, subdues the strife. In symbolic terms, the audience comprehended that France was not to burn; good would triumph over evil; and the Sun King, embued with honor and virtue, would reign supreme. The thirteen-hour ballet had forty-five separate dances culminating in the grand ballet; unfortunately, the name of the choreographer (or choreographers) is not known.10

Costuming for the ladies, as in the preceding dynasties, remained lavishly embellished contemporary court dress. The weight and length of these gowns, no doubt, made steps of elevation or pirouettes difficult to perform. Heeled shoes came into fashion during Louis XIV’s reign for both gentlemen and ladies. The gentlemen’s costume, known as *habit a la romaine*, consisted of a fitted bodice and a soft thigh or knee length skirt. All costumes exhibited symbolic representations to identify the occupation or persona of the role being
played; for example, Louis' costume as Apollo, the Sun King, had golden sunbursts as identifying attributes.\textsuperscript{11}

Dance was always an important part of Louis' life. He studied daily and appeared in ballets until he became too heavy. In 1661, to ensure the perpetuation of ballet and elevate its performance to a professional level, Louis founded the Académie Royale de Danse and, in 1669, the Académie Royale de Musique. In 1672 the two Académies were combined and became known as the Academie d'Opéra. The same year Jean-Baptist Lully, a Florentine musician, composer, and dancer, became director of the Opéra. During his years as director, Lully composed many operas in which ballets were inserted. He also collaborated with the playwright, Molière, to create a new ballet genre, the comédie ballet. These ballets were cheerful, and dance was integrated with the music and narrative instead of being inserted as a divertissement between acts. Lully died in 1687 and soon after the position of director of the Opéra passed to Pierre Beauchamps, who made major contributions in the development of ballet.\textsuperscript{12}

Pierre Beauchamps was one of the first outstanding French dancers to appear in ballets. He was born in 1631 and passed his examination to become a dancing master in the late 1640s.\textsuperscript{13} Then he became Louis XIV's dancing teacher for twenty-two years.\textsuperscript{14} Louis sensed the need for the codification of ballet technique and enlisted Beauchamps' aid. In the latter part of the 1670s, Beauchamps began working on a
method of dance notation, and by 1700, he had formulated the five basic positions of the feet, which are universally accepted as the basic technique of ballet today, just as French is its accepted language. These techniques were taught at the Academie by professional instructors whose training produced technically adept dancers who appeared on the Paris Opera stage. Thereafter, the history of ballet can be divided into four specific periods: Classical (1680 - 1800), Romantic (1800 - 1870) Second Classical (1870 - 1910), and Contemporary (1910 to the present), each of which has distinguishing characteristics, new concepts, and personalities.

The first period is the Classical period which dates from approximately 1680 to 1800. Even before this period, dancing had moved from the ballroom floor to the elevated stage that had been built by Cardinal Richelieu in 1636 in the Palais Royal. By the latter part of the seventeenth century, professional ballet was seen on an elevated stage at the Opéra. On these stages the performers were separated from the audience; the audience sat in front of them instead of around and above on three sides. Therefore, new considerations had to be made for presenting dance to its best advantage. The turned-out leg, which evolved around 1620, was fashionable during Louis' reign. Unlike the ninety-degree angle which was to be used later, only a moderate forty-five degree angle was used in social dancing and ballet. As well as being fashionable, the dancers discovered that a turned-out leg would
enhance their frontal silhouette and facilitate moving across the stage.

Themes continued to be mythologies, allegories, and stories exalting royal personages. Some of the popular dances were the courante, gigue, galliard, sarabande, bourrée, chaconne, and the minuet. Ballet technique, as we know it today, was not perfected; however, amateurs were being replaced by professionals who were trained by dance masters at the Académie. Now, not only the aristocracy but anyone who could afford the cost of classes, women as well as men, could study at the Paris Opera. Restrictions that had prevented women from appearing on the professional stage ended in 1681, when four noblewomen, led by Mlle. Lafontaine, appeared at the Opera in Lully’s ballet _Le Triomphe de l’Amour_. Confining heavy hooped skirts (the fashion of the day), high-heeled shoes, and heavy wigs were worn by the ladies until the eighteenth century when two ballerinas, Marie Camargo and Marie Sallé, made important costume innovations.

Marie-Anne Cupis de Camargo, born in 1710 in Brussels, was one of the favorite ballerinas of the eighteenth century. When she was ten, she began studying in Paris with the renowned Opéra ballerina, Francoise Prévost. Approximately five years later, Camargo made an outstanding debut on the Opéra stage. Her debut instilled so much jealousy in Prévost that Camargo was assigned to the back row of the corps de ballet. Not long thereafter, during a performance in which
David Dumoulin, an exceptional dancer, failed to appear for his solo, Camargo seized the opportunity to leap from the back row and take the missing dancer’s place. To the delight of the audience, she executed brilliant entrechat quatres, a step that heretofore had only been done by men. Camargo’s artistry led her to initiate important costume innovations for ballerinas: to expose her quickly beating feet, she shortened the hooped skirts, panniers, from floor length to just above the ankle. Such a shocking display caused an edict for dancers to wear precautionary panties, which were the predecessors of modern tights. Camargo also began to wear soft heel-less slippers, the prototype of contemporary ballet slippers.

Contrasting with Camargo’s manly flamboyant style was the technique of Marie Sallé, the most renowned dramatic ballerina of the eighteenth century. Sallé was born in 1707 in France and received her early training from members of her family who were entertainers in the Opéra Comique. After appearing in fairs and operettas with her brother, she began to study formally with Francoise Prévost and two of the outstanding male dancers of the Opéra, the handsome and gifted Nicolas Blondy, and Jean Balon whose name has been immortalized in ballet terminology. (Ballon referred to the springing quality of his dance). Around 1727 Sallé made her debut on the Opéra stage and was an immediate success, but it was her insightful philosophies and innovations that set a precedent in ballet.
She believed ballet lacked veracity; not only was costuming lacking in ethnic authenticity, but also the length and weight inhibited movement. She disliked the superficiality of ballet themes and believed dances should be filled with expression and emotion; she wanted to choreograph her own ballets.

In 1733, at Covent Garden, Marie's innovations came to fruition in the ballet *Pygmalion* which she choreographed. In *Pygmalion*, she proved herself as a dramatically expressive dancer, and she wore costuming appropriate to the theme and movement. Sallé replaced the stiff-hooped, long skirted attire with flowing Greek-styled drapery of unadorned muslin; she wore soft heel-less slippers; and she took off the heavy wig and allowed her hair to fall naturally to her shoulders. *Pygmalion* was noted as the precursor of the ballet d''action--a ballet with a coherent story line. Marie Sallé retired from the Opéra in 1739 with a pension awarded by the king. She came out of retirement between 1745-1747 to appear in twenty ballets at Versailles. She did not perform for the next five years but was seen once again, in 1752, in four ballets at Fontainebleau. At forty-five Sallé retired again, and died four years later in 1756.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, female prominence on the ballet stage was becoming apparent. The notables included: Marie-Therese Subligny; Barbara Campanini; Marie Allard; Anna Heinel, who originated *pirouettes a la seconde*;
19 and Marie Guimard. Although ballerinas were replacing the men in prominence--even playing the male roles en travesti--the names of quite a few men are found in the annals of ballet.

Gaetan Vestris, born in 1729, was a well-known male dancer in the latter part of the century. His dancing style was courtly and picture-pose oriented. Like all male dancers of the time, he wore masks and heavy wigs when he performed. One evening in 1772, when he was too ill to appear in Castor and Pollux, an opera by Rameau, Gaetan was replaced by Maximilien Gardel. Gardel refused to wear a wig and mask and thereby freed future generations of dancers from the burdensome accoutrements.

Maximilien had a successful career as a dancer and choreographer. He and Jean Dauberval became co-dance masters of the Opéra when they replaced Gaetan Vestris in 1776. Gaetan, after retiring from the stage, became a choreographer and teacher. His son Auguste, born 1808, became a brilliant dancer and later a teacher. Auguste's pupils, who gained fame in the following era, included dancers/choreographers Jules Perrot and Auguste Bournonville.

Jean-Georges Noverre is one of the most prestigious names in the Classical period. His philosophies and innovations temporarily changed the manner of eighteenth-century ballet. Noverre, born in 1727, began his dance training with Louis Dupré. His first performance at Fountainebleu was not excep-
tional and subsequently he became a dancer in the Opera Comique. Four years later he became its ballet master. Noverre’s dancing ability was limited and his desire to become ballet master at the Opéra was not realized until he was fifty years old.

His greatest contribution to the evolution of ballet were his Lettres sur la Danse, published in 1760. The concepts he espoused, which were the essence of the ballet d’action, were similar to those of Marie Sallé for he, too, believed in the need for verisimilitude. In his Lettres Noverre implored dancers to discontinue the use of intricate steps solely for the purpose of display, to replace meaningless gestures and expressions with natural movements emanating from internal emotions, to discard the wigs, cumbersome head­dresses, and masks that concealed natural expressions. He recommended costumes that would be historically accurate and liberate the dancer’s body and movements. Additionally, Noverre wanted plot, scenery, and music to be unified with the dancers and dances used logically within the ballet. Noverre became very rigid in enforcing the principles of his ballets d’action; he became irascible and sometimes spat on the floor to indicate where a dancer was to stand. In 1809, at the age of eighty-two, he died in Saint Germain. 20

One of the greatest personalities in the latter part of the Classical period was Charles-Louis Didelot who was born in Stockholm and lived from 1767 to 1837. Didelot’s first stage
performance in Sweden was as Cupid. In 1776 Gustav III, his patron, sent him to Paris where he received his training and inspiration from Jean Dauberval, choreographer of *Le Fille de Mal Gardé*, Auguste Vestris, and Jean Noverre.21

Didelot is remembered not only for his dancing but also for his imaginative use of stage machinery and his costume innovations. In 1791 Didelot appeared in the ballet *Bacchus et Ariadne*. He did not wear the customary tonnelet; rather, he wore "flesh-colored tights with a tiger’s skin thrown over his shoulder, grape leaves in his hair, and a staff of Bacchus in his hand."22 That same year he appeared in the opera *Corisande* and dared to wear a translucent gauze tunic while his partner, Mademoiselle Chévigny, wore Grecian drapery. Didelot’s costume changes gained popularity, and eventually their use by soloist and corps became accepted on the ballet stage.

Didelot delighted in creating ballets in which stage machinery would fly dancers, children, and even doves above the stage. Heavy stage machinery, its ropes and other devices hidden by cottony clouds, had been in use for centuries; but, by the end of the eighteenth century, the apparatuses had been refined to a system of thin wires and harnesses which were attached to the performers. In 1795 Didelot delighted the audience with the one-act aerial ballet, *La Métamorphose*. This was an anacreontic ballet (a ballet set in an Elysian field, where wine and love were sought). *La Métamorphose* was
expanded the following year into two acts and became his most famous ballet, *Zéphire et Flore*. Didelot danced the role of Zéphire and his wife, Rose, danced as Flora. This ballet, in which ballerinas were lowered lightly onto the tips of their toes, is believed to have been the inspiration for dancing *en pointe*. Didelot travelled to Russia in 1801. He taught classes which strengthened the dancers’ classic technique and developed their art of pantomime. He produced his works at the Russian Imperial Theatre where he created a Russian ballet company that rivalled, perhaps even outshone the Paris Opera. His philosophies and innovations lead directly to the next period of ballet.

The Romantic period dates from approximately 1800 to 1870. Romanticism was a movement in literature, art, and dance which rebelled against the strict rules established by the academies. For the Romanticists, the hardships that existed at the end of the French Revolution and the beginning of industrialization gave rise to new themes in which the real, the ideal, and the unearthly commingled as the rigid forms and techniques gave way to passion. Subject matter no longer relied on mythology and allegory. Heroic themes, which exalted the glories of the Revolution, were used. Contemporary literature, such as Victor Hugo’s *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* which premiered in 1844 as *La Esmeralda*, became sources of inspiration. The most popular romantic ballets were the *ballets blanc*, white ballets. They combined local color or
exotic distant lands in Act I with the otherworldly in Act II. In the white fairy ballets, the reality of day faded into the shadowy ethereal night, and men fell in love with unattainable sprites.

By 1822 gas lighting had replaced candle lighting on stage which augmented the shadowy supernatural atmosphere of the romantic ballets. Costumes became more diaphanous for the ballerinas. The romantic tutu for the white ballet had a somewhat bell-shaped, mid-calf length skirt made of translucent muslin. There were filmy wing-like sleeves that covered the upper arms, and some tutus had small wings attached at the back. Flower garlands adorned smoothly pulled back hair, pearl necklace and bracelets graced neck and arms, and some of the leading ballerinas wore soft, unblocked pointe shoes.

Male dancers became less prominent during the latter part of the nineteenth century and were seldom seen in any significant role. Their lack of masculinity and their clumsiness had been severely criticized by Théophile Gautier, which may have led to their near demise. Gautier had abundant praise for the ballerinas, on the other hand, and they became venerated on and off the stage.

The five most prominent ballerinas of the Romantic era were Lucile Grahn, Fanny Cerrito, Marie Taglioni, Fanny Elssler, and Carlotta Grisi. Four of them Grahn, Cerrito, Taglioni, and Grisi appeared in the acclaimed ballet *Pas de Quarte*, which debuted in London in 1845 by edict of Queen
Victoria. Choreographer, Jules Perrot, succeeded in bringing the four rival ballerinas together in the *Pas de Quatre* and ingeniously created *divertissments* to exploit the virtuosity of each dancer.

Fanny Elssler, the fifth ballerina, was born in Vienna in 1810 and received her first dance training at the Theater an der Wien. When Fanny was seven, she studied with Jean Aumer at the Vienna Court Opera, and by 1829, she was dancing leading roles in Vienna, Berlin, and London. In 1834, after training with the aged Auguste Vestris, she made her debut in *La Tempête* at the Paris Opera. *Cachucha*, a fiery Spanish-style character dance, is one of the dances for which she is renowned. *Cachucha*, which she choreographed, was ideally suited to her earthy, sensual, and powerful style. The "pink satin costume decorated with black lace and silver braid, in which she danced her famous Cachucha," can be seen in the Austrian National Library's Theatre Collection. Fanny's talent was recognized in many ballets: *Giselle*, *La Fille Mal Gardée*, and *La Gipsy*. In 1840, she became the first prima ballerina to dance in the United States. Fanny Elssler died in 1844.

Marie Taglioni, born in Stockholm, of Swedish and Italian descent, is considered to be the quintessential ballerina of the Romantic period. Her father, Phillippe, was a dancer, choreographer, and ballet master, and her mother was the daughter of an opera singer. As a child of twelve, Marie was
thin, clumsy, uncomely, and did not take a serious interest in her ballet classes, which were taught by Jean-Françoise Coulon. At seventeen, she was not even permitted to perform in the corps de ballet at the Opéra. Her father, who was not with the family in Paris but was serving as a ballet master in Vienna, was disappointed to learn of Marie’s failure.

Thereafter the family returned to Vienna and Phillipe devised an extensive training program for Marie. The regimen consisted of six months of six-hour classes in which modesty, grace, delicacy, lightness, and ballon were stressed. In 1822 Marie appeared in Vienna in La Réception d’ue Nymphé au Temple de Terpsichore; she performed in Germany and finally appeared at the Opéra in a dance inserted into Le Sicilien. Her greatest triumph came in 1832 in La Sylphide, which her father created for her. In it Marie danced the role of the Syphide. She danced on the tips of her toes, an incorporeal being, whose modesty, grace, lightness, and child-like charm ideally suited her. Marie and this ballet became the paradigm for the era.

Lucile Grahn (1821-1907) was a tall and delicate Danish ballerina. Grahn began her studies and made her first appearances in Copenhagen. In 1838 she debuted at the Paris Opera in Le Carnaval de Venise. The following year she danced Taglioni’s role in La Sylphide which had been re-choreographed for her by August Bournonville. Her dancing style possessed the same lightness and modest grace of Taglioni; she was a
brilliant technician and she danced on pointe. In 1843 she debuted in Russia dancing the role of Giselle; the following year she was in London to dance in Perrot’s Eoline, and then the Pas de Quarte. She retired in Germany and died there in 1907.

Fanny Cerrito (1821-1899) was a diminutive curvaceous ballerina from Naples. She studied at the Ballet School of the Royal Theatre and made her debut at the San Carlo in L’Oroscopo, when she was fourteen. Fanny appeared in London, Vienna, in Milan at La Scala, where she prima ballerina from 1838 to 1840. Fanny is best remembered in the ballets Alma and Ondine choreographed by Jules Perrot; however, in Ondine she herself choreographed some of the dances for her role as a nereid. Her style was exquisite and bold; she excelled in steps of elevation and quickness, and she danced brilliantly on pointe.

In 1843 Fanny was partnered by Arthur Saint-Léone, whom she later married. Saint-Léone was a composer, dancer, and later, a choreographer. His most acclaimed ballet is Coppélia, which was choreographed in 1870 and is still in ballet repertoires of today.

Cerrito made her debut in La Fille de Marbe at the Paris Opera in 1847. Both she and Saint-Léone were successful on the Opera stage; however, their marriage was becoming stormy and eventually was dissolved in Spain. Fanny returned to London, and then, in Paris, choreographed Gemma, “the first
Carlotta Grisi (1819-1899) studied ballet in Milan, and by the time she was ten, she was given solo roles at La Scala. Four years later when she was dancing in Naples, she met Jules Perrot. Perrot became her teacher and her husband; he choreographed many ballets for her. In February 1841 he choreographed the pas de deux in La Favorite for her debut at the Paris Opera. In June he choreographed the dances that led to her fame.

Carlotta Grisi is remembered as the first Giselle. The ballet, taken from a German legend, was written for her by Theophile Gautier. Jules Coralli was named on the program as the choreographer, but it was Perrot who choreographed all of Carlotta’s dances. Giselle remains in current ballet repertoires and is used as a vehicle to test ballerina’s dramatic and technical abilities. After Carlotta left the Opera in 1849, she went to Russia and made her debut in Giselle. She later travelled to Switzerland where she retired.

Jules Perrot, an outstanding choreographer and dancer of the Romantic period, was born in Lyon in 1810. When thirteen, he studied in Paris with Auguste Vestris who encouraged him to attain brilliant ballon and speed to compensate for his unattractiveness. In 1830 he debuted in London and in Paris where he partnered Taglioni for a short time. He travelled to
Italy where he met and fell in love with Carlotta Grisi and choreographed for her. She was not the only ballerina for whom he choreographed. For Fanny Cerrito, he choreographed one of her most popular dances in *Pas de Fascination* and the ballet *Ondine*; he choreographed *Faust* for Fanny Elssler; and for Lucile Grahn, he created the dances in *Ondine*. Perrot became ballet master in Russia from 1851 to 1859; when he returned to Europe his work was no longer in demand. Perrot died in Brittany in 1892.

Auguste Bournonville was a Danish choreographer who endeavored to maintain the prominence of the male dancer during an era when the female was held in esteem. Bournonville began his training in Copenhagen with his dancer father and Vincenzo Galeotti of the Royal Danish Ballet. Between 1820 and 1828 he studied in Paris with Auguste Vestris from whom he learned the French classical technique. Bournonville became ballet master of the Royal Danish Ballet in 1830. In his ballets the male dancer did not simply support the ballerina; rather, the females were required to do the same difficult leaps and *batterie* as the males. Thus, the men and women shared equal prominence. Many of Bournonville’s ballets are extant, for example the characteristic *Napoli*, which premiered in 1842. Bournonville retired in 1877 and two years later he died.

Since the creation of the Académie in the seventeenth century, France had reigned supreme as the center for ballet.
That was to change as ballet moved to Russia and the Romantic era gave way to the succeeding Second Classic or Classical period, CA. 1870 to 1910. During this period, foreign dancers and choreographers brought about significant changes in the art.

Foreign techniques merged to form a technique that was sparkling and precise. The lyricism of the French classical technique succumbed to a technique characterized by sharp, brilliant, movements. As a result, tutus were shortened to mid thigh in order to reveal the ballerina’s exquisite technique. The pointe shoe was no longer restricted to a few dancers but was used extensively, and pointe work became more demanding. Dancers gained greater consideration because of the state-supported schools and "imperial patronage." Male dancers assumed roles of importance, and the corps de ballet, instead of being used decoratively, danced as an integrated part of ballets.

The most outstanding contributions in the Second Classic period were made by a Frenchman, Marius Petipa, who was born in 1822 in Marsaille. Marius began his ballet training at seven with his father Jean, who was a fine dancer and choreographer. His brother Lucien, also a superb dancer, was the first Albrecht in *Giselle* and partner of Carlotta Grisi. Marius made his debut in 1831 in Brussels and in 1838 held the position of premier danseur in Nantes. The following year he and his father premiered in New York, but because of unful-
filled contractual agreements with management, they were forced to return to France. Marius studied in Paris with Auguste Vestris; then he spent four years in Spain, where he danced and produced ballets. In 1847 Marius moved to Russia, and in 1869 he became ballet master of the Imperial Ballet.

During his reign at the theatres in St. Petersburg and Moscow, Petipa formalized the construction of ballets and defined and differentiated the dances within. Typically Petipa created full-length story ballets filled with conventionalized, pantomimic gesture. Dance, however, became autonomous and pure. Character dances were ethnically accurate and stylistically distinguishable from a classical technique. Dances in each act of a ballet followed a precise order, and sequences within each dance were formalized. Petipa’s canon for the grand pas de deux exists today: the entrée, the slow adagio, performed by the ballerina and danseur; two variations, a solo for the danseur and a solo for the ballerina, and last, the coda, in which the two dancers display their virtuosity in a quick, allegro pas de deux.

Petipa choreographed his last ballet, The Magic Mirror, in 1903 and two years later entered the Imperial Theatre not as ballet master but as spectator. His legacy exists in the ballets that are performed today: Don Quixote, first produced in Moscow in 1869; La Bayadère, performed in 1876; The Sleeping Beauty first performance, 1890; and Swan Lake, which he revised and co-choreographed with Lev Ivanov, with music by
Tchaikovsky, which premiered in 1895. All in all Petipa created fifty-four ballets, revised seventeen ballets of other choreographers, and choreographed dances for thirty-five operas. In 1910, after several years of retirement in the Crimea, Petipa died.

Russia saw the importation of many foreign ballerinas during the Second Classical period. There were the four ballerinas who had danced in the Pas de Quatre, and several Italian ballerinas--Virginia Zucchi noted for her daring and fiery performances, Pierina Legnani, who was the first ballerina to execute thirty-two fouettés, and Carlotta Brianza, the first Aurora in The Sleeping Beauty. Outstanding Russian ballerinas who danced on the Imperial stage were Mathilde Kchessinskaya and Olga Prebrajenska.

During the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, a rebellion arose against Petipa’s stilted ballets and his unyielding domination. Once again ballet was ready for innovations. Although the revolutionary concepts were born in Russia, their execution happened in Paris.

Michel Fokine, born in 1880 in St. Petersburg, was the first Russian dancer to submit new ideas for ballet. When he was nine, he was admitted into the Imperial Ballet School, and two years later, he was given a leading role in the school’s production of The Magic Flute. In 1898 Fokine made his debut in Paquita at the Maryinsky Theatre. By 1899 he was a premier
danseur and choreographer at the Imperial School of Ballet. Fokine had become dissatisfied with the banality and disparity of ballet. He believed, as Noverre had, that all elements of ballet—plot, costume, movement, and scenery—should be unified. He disliked meaningless gestures and stylized poses, and he felt that dance should originate in emotions instead of being used exclusively to impress. In 1904 he submitted his philosophies with the libretto for Daphnis and Chloe to the Director of the Imperial Theatres. They were rejected. In 1909 Fokine’s concepts were realized in the ballets he choreographed at the Chatelet Theatre in Paris for Sergai Diaghilev.

Diaghilev, born in Perm in 1872, arrived in St. Petersburg in 1890 where he entered the university as a law student. He became interested in the arts, and in 1899, he and his associates founded the Mir Isskustva, The World of Art, of which Diaghilev was the editor. Diaghilev presented Russian art exhibitions and operas in Paris; in 1909 he began importing dancers to Paris. His first company, composed of fifty-five Russian dancers, thrilled the Parisian audiences. The soloists included notables Anna Pavlova, Thamar Karsavina, Ida Rubinstein, Vaslav Nijinsky, Michel Mordkin, and Adolph Bolm. The program was comprised of ballets choreographed by ballet master, Michel Fokine: Les Sylphides, Cléopâtre, Le Festin, Le Pavillon d’Armiade and the Polovtsian dances from Prince Igor. With the popularity of the Ballet Russes and Fokine’s
and Diagilev's innovations, ballet advanced into another definable era.

The Contemporary period dates from approximately 1910 to the present. During the early part of the twentieth century, Russian choreographers began to relocate in the United States, where they performed, taught, choreographed, and founded their own schools and companies. In 1921 Fokine opened a ballet school in New York City, and in the thirties, George Balanchine began creating dances for Lincoln Kirstein's school in Hartford, Connecticut.

George Balanchine was born in Georgia, U.S.S.R. in 1904. When he was nine, he was admitted to the Imperial Theatre Ballet School. His first choreography, a pas de deux entitled La Nuit, was performed at the school in 1920. The following year Balanchine entered the State Theatre of Opera and Ballet and in 1923 became ballet master of the Mikhailovsky Opera Theatre. Around 1925 Balanchine began choreographing opera ballets for Diaghilev in Monte Carlo. In 1933, George Balanchine was persuaded by Kirstein to come to the United States. In the following decades Balanchine became ballet master for the American Ballet, and in 1948, he was appointed ballet master of the New York City Ballet. George Balanchine, one of the outstanding choreographers of the century, created for opera, ballet, Broadway musicals, and film.

In the Contemporary Period, ballet fell under the influence of other dance genres--the modern bare-footed
expressionistic dance of Isadore Duncan, ethnic, jazz, and tap -- all blended to change the appearance of ballet. Themes, music, scenery, and dance were unified. Abstract themes, such as Fokine's *La Sylphide*, and Balanchine's *Movements for Piano and Orchestra*, emerged with movement performed for the sake of movement. Codified pantomime was replaced by natural expressive movement. Costuming was faithful to the plot and ranged from the classical tutu and pointe shoes to simple leotard and tights, contemporary street wear, and western apparel and boots.

By the late thirties, America had produced its own talented dancers and choreographers. Themes of the American West emerged. Two prominent dancers/choreographers who devised Americana themes were Eugene Loring and Agnes de Mille.

Eugene Loring danced in New York with Fokine's Company and the American Ballet. In 1938 he choreographed and danced the role of Billy in *Billy The Kid*. *Billy the Kid*, the first Americana ballet, is about William Bonney who killed twenty-one men by his twenty-first birthday. Pioneers and cowboys were all authentically clothed and used abstracted movements indicative of the occupations of the roles portrayed. *Rodeo*, the second Americana ballet to be presented, was choreographed by Agnes de Mille in 1942. Agnes de Mille, the niece of the well-known film director Cecil B. de Mille, was born in 1909 in New York City. She was reared in Los Angeles and received
her dance training there. She attended the University of Southern California after which, in 1927, she began her dancing career.

During the early thirties, de Mille danced and choreographed in London, and in the late thirties, she returned to the United States. Upon her return she was acclaimed for her work in the Broadway productions, *Hooray for What* in 1937, and in 1939, *Singin' the Dream*. In 1943 de Mille choreographed her first Broadway success, *Oklahoma!*, after which she choreographed *One Touch of Venus*, 1943; *Bloomer Girl*, 1944; *Carousel*, 1945; *Brigadoon*, 1947; and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, 1949, to name a few. Agnes de Mille has had a triumphant choreographic career in ballet, on Broadway, and in films. She is a valued spokesperson for the arts; and in 1980, she received the Kennedy Center Award for her artistic contributions to dance. She has published extensively on many facets of the arts--her thirteenth book has just been published.

The Contemporary period continues to blend dance forms. It is filled with new ideas, philosophies, and artists. Because of the multitude of outstanding ballet personalities and the intent and limited scope of this work, only selected artists in the following films will be cited: *Dancers* and *The Red Shoes*, backstage musicals in which dance is naturally inserted in rehearsal and performance scenes and *Oklahoma!*, an integrated musical in which all dances serve to forward the plot.
Dancers (1987), with dances staged by Mikhail Baryshnikov, has rehearsal scenes and ballet sequences from Act I and II of the Romantic ballet Giselle. Giselle, a young peasant girl, falls in love with Count Albrecht who has disguised himself as a villager, Loys. Hilarion, a forester, loves Giselle and cautions her about Loys. Hilarion sets out to discover Loy’s true identity. He uncovers his true title and also learns of his betrothal to a noblewoman Bathilde. The moment Giselle is to become Queen of the Village, Bathilde and a hunting party arrive; Hilarion exposes Loys, and Giselle becomes mad and kills herself with Albrecht’s sword.

In contrast with Act I, which takes place in the village by day, Act II takes place at night in unhallowed land. Wilis, the ghosts of girls who were rejected and died prior to their wedding, lure men to dance themselves to death. As Albrecht brings flowers to Giselle’s grave, she appears. Myrtha, the Queen of the Wilis, condemns Albrecht to dance to death; however, Giselle saves him from his sentence. As dawn breaks the Wilis’ power diminishes. They fade and disappear. Albrecht is left alone, grieving at Giselle’s grave.

Throughout the film, an analogous plot, shown in contemporary terms, intertwines with the story line of Giselle. The lead dancers, from the American Ballet Theatre, play dual roles. One role represents a character in the real off-stage world; the second role is the dancer/character in the on-stage world of the ballet. Thomas Rall, who is not seen in dancing
and has the part of Hilarion in the ballet; Leslie Browne is cast as Nadine and dances the role of Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis; Alessandra Ferri plays Francesca and dances the role of Giselle; and Mikhail Baryshnikov appears as Tony and performs the dancing role of Albrecht, Count of Silesia.

Mikhail Baryshnikov was born January 28, 1948, in Riga, Latvia, U.S.S.R. He studied at the Riga Ballet School until he was fifteen, after which he studied with Pushkin in Leningrad. In 1967 he joined the Kirov and soon became one of the company’s celebrated stars. While on tour with the Kirov in 1974, Baryshnikov remained in Canada. He danced with American Ballet Theatre from 1974 to 1978, and with the New York City Ballet from 1978 to 1979. The following year Baryshnikov assumed the role of artistic director for the American Ballet Theatre. In addition to his work on the stage, he has appeared in the films *The Turning Point* and *White Knights* and was seen with Liza Minnelli in the 1980 television production, *Baryshnikov on Broadway*.

Alessandra Ferri was born in Milan, Italy, May 6, 1963. When she was six, she began her ballet training at a Catholic school where classes met once a week. At ten she entered La Scala Opera Ballet School. Because of the strict rules—a minimum of fifteen years with the company was required before a principal role could be obtained—and the lack of opportunities for young dancers, she left the school after three years. In 1978 Ferri travelled to London, where she auditioned and
In 1978 Ferri travelled to London, where she auditioned and was accepted into the Royal Ballet School. After six years of training, she joined the company. Baryshnikov saw her dance on the opening night of Swan Lake at La Scala, after which, he invited her to come to the United States to join the American Ballet Theatre. In August, 1985, Alessandra Ferri became a principal dancer with the American company. Two years later she appeared in Dancers. After the filming, she returned to Italy to reassess her philosophies of dance and life, then returned to the American Ballet Theatre.

Leslie Brown was born in 1957, in New York. Her early dance training was with her parents, Isabel Mirrow and Kelly Brown, who had danced with the American Ballet Theatre. In 1972 she received a scholarship at the School of American Ballet and, within eighteen months, was accepted into the New York City Ballet. In 1977 she danced the ingenue ballerina role in The Turning Point. Leslie became a soloist with the American Ballet Theatre, and in 1980, she played the role of Romola Nijinsky in the film Nijinsky.

The Red Shoes (1948), a British film, contains one of the most famous ballets in cinema. The musical is of the back-stage genre, where dance is used naturally within the plot. The ballet sequences are either during a rehearsal or at a performance. The off-stage story shows the emotional struggle of Victoria Page (Moira Shearer) between a life totally dedicated to dance or a life spent with the man she loves. Ballet
master Lermontov pulls her toward dance; her lover needs her companionship. Torn, Victoria makes her decision to run to her lover but instead falls to her death, and the drama ends tragically. Her red pointe shoes are removed from her feet. Victoria Page will dance no more.

The fourteen-minute ballet, *The Red Shoes*, is a balletic expression of a story by Hans Christian Anderson and is representative of the Contemporary period. It is choreographed by Robert Helpmann, who dances the role of the Boy. The role of the Shoemaker is danced by Leonide Massine and Moira Shearer dances the role of the Girl. The ballet’s theme is similar to the dramatic story line. The red shoes are a metaphor for the Girl’s aspiration to dance. The Girl sees the shoes in a shop window and wants to possess them. The Boy tries to dissuade her, but she is enticed by the Shoemaker’s beautiful red shoes. Once the shoes are on her feet, they possess her, and she dances and dances. She exhausts her partners, then she, too, becomes exhausted and hallucinates. The Shoemaker gives her a knife with which she tries to remove the shoes but cannot. At last a priest takes the shoes from her feet. She is dead. The Shoemaker seizes the shoes and returns them to the shop window but changes his mind. Instead, he offers them with their allure to the viewers.

In addition to the *Red Shoes* ballet, there are also excerpts in the film from *Le Lac des Cygnes*, *Coppélia*,
Giselle, and La Boutique Fantasque, which date from the eighteenth and nineteenth century; and there are scenes at rehearsals and at the barre. In the Red Shoes ballet, which was choreographed expressly for the film, a melding of dance genres is seen—most notably, modern. Modern dance carriage is seen in the entrance of the women in the churchyard and in the leotard-clad men’s movement in the City of the Dead. There is also a multiplicity of costumes, which ranges from filmy ballet dress for the ballerina to contemporary streetwear for the company and sometimes for the Boy.

The Red Shoes remains the classic film for balletomanes. It inspired many young girls to attend ballet class. It brought ballet to an audience who might never have had an opportunity to attend a live ballet performance and it brought international fame to a youthful Scottish ballerina.

No other ballerina had appealed to movie audiences as did Moira Shearer. Moira was born in 1926 in Scotland. At ten she began theatre studies near Glasgow. In 1941 she made her debut with the International Ballet and the following year joined the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company. The Red Shoes was her debut as an actress/dancer. She appeared in New York at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1949, 1950, and 1954. Additional films in which she appeared are: The Tales of Hoffman, The Story of Three Loves, The Man Who Loved Redheads, and Black Tights. After touring in the United States and Canada, Moira retired from the ballet stage to do dramatic
theatrical roles.

Leonide Massine, who dances the role of the Shoemaker, was born in Moscow in 1895. He studied for the stage at the Theatre School in Moscow. In 1914 he made his debut in the Ballet Russe. The following year he choreographed his first ballet, Soleil de Nuit, for Diaghilev. Massine danced and choreographed for the Ballet Russe until 1921. Two of his works from that period are: The Three Cornered Hat, 1919, and La Boutique Fantasque, 1919. He discontinued his alliance with Diaghilev's Ballet Russe in 1921. In 1933 Massine became director for René Blum's Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. In the forties, Massine appeared in the United States with Blum's company and the American Ballet Theatre. In 1946 he returned to Europe, then London, where he choreographed for the Royal Ballet and the London Festival Ballet.

Robert Helpmann, who dances the role of the Boy and choreographed The Red Shoes, was born in South Australia in 1909. His professional dancing career began in Sydney in 1927. In 1933 he went to London and appeared in the corps de ballet of the Vic-Wells Ballet. Two years later Helpmann became premiere danseur and partner of Margot Fonteyn at the Sadler's Wells Ballet. He spent fifteen years with Sadler's Wells, then pursued an acting career. Helpmann is recognized as an accomplished actor, choreographer, and director. He excels in mime and has played roles that exhibit his skills as an actor and dancer. He danced with Moira Shearer in The
Tales of Hoffman and can be seen in One of Our Aircraft is Missing, Henry IV, Not For Money, and The Soldier’s Tale. He appeared on television in Boxes for One and A Half Hour with Robert Helpmann in Australia.

Oklahoma! was choreographed by Agnes de Mille in 1943 for Broadway and in 1955 for film. Oklahoma! is considered the first truly integrated musical, in which all songs and dances are dictated by the plot. Unlike the backstage musical genre, which uses excuses to insert dance and song, in an integrated musical they are used to advance the plot or develop a character.

There are a variety of dance genres used in Oklahoma!: tap, social dance, western hoedown, and two Contemporary period ballets. "Many a New Day," the first ballet, is danced by the female ensemble who function as an emotional support group for Laurie, the female lead. As Laurie sings, the ensemble prims and preens, while they prepare to go to a box luncheon. Ballet movements are stylized with a great deal of pantomime and gesture. White camisoles and bloomers, period female undergarments, are worn for the ballet.

The second ballet is a dream ballet in which the singer/actor parts of Laurie and Curly are taken by dancers, Bambi Linn and James Mitchell. The dancing is a combination of classical ballet technique and modern jazz. Costuming, for men and women, is western wear. The dream ballet in Oklahoma!, at the end of the first act, is surrealistic in nature.
and foreshadows the story's end. It tells an entire story with a beginning, middle, and end; and illustrates the desire of the dreamer. In Oklahoma! the dream ballet is a dream of fear: Laurie is in love with Curly and is afraid Judd will hurt him if she does not go to the box luncheon with him. Laurie and Curly begin with a pas de deux, in which their love and happiness are expressed through gesture and movement. When they are about to be married, Curly lifts Laurie's white veil, and he abruptly changes into Judd. Judd's movements are heavy and awkward; he roughly dances with Laurie. The scene shifts to a barroom where limp dancers dance. As the tempo quickens, Laurie joins them in a can-can then runs from the room. She runs and runs, seeking Curly. As the wind howls and a tornado appears on the horizon, Judd and Curly battle. Curly is killed. Judd lifts Laurie triumphantly over his head and carries her away. The ballet ends; Laurie awakens; the plot advances to the foreshadowed end.

Bambi Linn was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1926. She studied dance with Mikhail Mordkin, Agnes de Mille, and at the Neighborhood Playhouse. Linn debuted on Broadway in Oklahoma! in the role of Aggie. She appeared in other Broadway productions and danced in Ballet Theatre. During the fifties, she appeared on many TV shows with her husband, Rod Alexander. Linn assisted in the choreography for Twentieth Century Fox's films Carousel and The Best Things in Life are Free in 1956. After retiring from her professional career, she shared her
expertise with her students in her dancing school in Connecti­
cut.

James Mitchell was born in 1920, in Sacramento, Cali­
for­nia. His early dance experience was with Lestor Horton, and later he had a lengthy career with Agnes de Mille in New York. He first appeared for de Mille on Broadway in Bloomer Girl, then Paint Your Wagon. He danced in her ballets, Fall River Legend and Rodeo. Mitchell can be seen in the films, The Band Wagon and A Turning Point.
NOTES


19. Migel, 60.

20. Kirstein, 220.


22. Swift, 44.

23. Anderson, 43.


CHAPTER II

BALLROOM

Ballroom, or social dance as it is also called, is the most popular of the dance genres, because it can be done by everyone. Probably most adults have participated, or will participate, in some form of social dancing in their lifetime. Additionally, it is the most visible of all dance forms; it is seen at social gatherings, on ballroom floors, on the stage, on television, and in films. Wherever ballroom dance is seen or performed, it retains its integrity: i.e., a waltz, fox-trot, or any ballroom dance would look the same world-wide.

The roots of ballroom dance can be found in the chain dances that were done by men and women as early as the twelfth century, B.C.1 By the thirteenth century A.D., during the late Medieval period, both peasants and nobility danced chain dances called Caroles. There were two forms of Caroles: the Branle which was done in a circle or arc and the Farandole which moved in a line. The dances, which could be done by men and women, or a gender segregated group, were done outdoors. The dancers linked hands and followed one another in a line. They either walked or skipped as they sang, for at this time there was no written musical accompaniment. Sometime during the Medieval period (even the exact century is uncertain)
couples broke away from the chain of dancers to dance side by side in the Estampie.² Movements were modest and reflected the courtly and religious mores of the time. The Estampie brought about important innovations. Unlike the former chain dances and even the ballroom dances of today that are done without a focal point or any specific orientation, the Estampie followed a specific floor pattern and was directed to a Presence. There was improvised musical accompaniment, and the Estampie was the first Danse à Deux, dance for one couple. The dancing couple danced alone, while the others looked on, a convention that evolved into ceremonial court dances.

Before the fifteenth century, dances had been done outdoors on resilient grass, or when the weather was inclement, on rush-covered floors. Eventually, first in Italy, however, when dancers moved inside, their feet came in contact with the smooth hard-surfaced floors in the palaces. The floor was smooth and unfettered from reeds and rushes, but the room's size and shape were more confining than outdoors. As a result, changes naturally occurred. Dancers began to rise onto the balls of their feet, then lower themselves, and their dance patterns were altered to conform to the shape of the room. Although moderate leaping and springing haute dances were performed, the Basse dances were the most popular dances of the fifteenth century. The Basse dance was performed with slow, gliding steps in formations around the floor. The dance was done in couples, and the trains of the ladies' long heavy
gowns swept out behind them as they progressed in patterns around the floor. At court a degree of decorum and formality had been introduced into the dancing, and by the sixteenth century, dance techniques were divided by a class system. Raucous folk dances were done primarily by peasants; court dances, which evolved into professional ballet and modern ballroom, were done exclusively by the aristocracy. Their dances became artificially elegant and reflected the grandeur and manners of the royal families and their courtiers.

During the Renaissance a dance manual, Orchesography, was published (1589) by Jehan Tabourot under the pseudonym Thoinot Arbeau. In his book, the social dances of his time--Branles, Pavanes, and Galliards, to name a few, are described and illustrated. By this time, music was composed specifically for each dance, and the heretofore uncodified dances were given specific steps, sequences, and techniques. Music was composed for each dance, and the dances were performed in a two-part suite. Within the pre-classic dance suite, rhythms and steps contrasted: slow rhythms evoked slow, stately steps; brighter rhythms inspired livelier robust dance movements. The first dance of the suite was the Pavane (the peacock). It was a slow and majestic dance, whose origin can be found in Spain. The Galliard which followed originated in Italy and was a characteristically gay and lively dance.

New dances began replacing the old in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and eventually the dance selections
were increased and grouped into a standardized, four-part suite. Around 1620 the Allemande replaced the Pavane as the first dance of the suite. The Allemande was a grave and unwieldy dance that originated in Germany. When the dance found its way into the courts of France, it acquired grace and sentimentality. Its romanticism was reflected in its being the only dance in which the dancers never unclasped each other’s hands. By approximately 1629 the Pavane and Galliard had lost their popularity, and the Courante became the second dance of the suite. In France the Courante coupled pantomimic flirtatious gestures with little running and gliding steps. It was Louis XIV’s favorite dance and was the dance in which the turned-out foot position was established as proper for dance. The third dance was the stately Spanish Sarabande, and the fourth, liveliest dance was the Gigue. The origin of the Gigue is disputed—there was the Italian giga and the English jig; however, the common instrumental accompaniment remains the same. The fiddle, geige in German, was and is today a common accompaniment to the brisk and vital dance. Around 1670 the Minuet was introduced at the French Court and became the final dance of an expanded suite. Its popularity lasted more than one hundred years and ended only with the French Revolution. When Louis XIV established the Royal Academy in Paris, during the seventeenth century, the final cleavage in social dance was made. Social dancing, which evolved into modern ballroom dance, remained in the ballrooms
and was done by amateurs for pleasure; and social dance, which was embellished and perfected at the Academy, became classical ballet and was performed by trained professionals on the stage.

Dances that were popular at the close of the seventeenth century were still danced at the beginning of the next century. Additionally, English Country Dances (Contredanse, Contradanza) and Cotillions came into fashion. These dances were danced in various floor patterns, with few or no leaping steps. The nineteenth century brought about a great change in social dance. With the end of the French Revolution, the stilted formality of the aristocracy’s dancing gave way to a new romantic and liberal freedom of movement. Moreover, with the end of the highly structured class system, the bourgeoisies began more and more to dance social dances in public dance halls. The first, the most important and the long lasting of the dances that epitomized the era, was the Waltz. The Waltz was danced at the end of the eighteenth century, but it did not gain acceptance in England and France until the early part of the 1800s. The Waltz’s probably originated in the rustic, swirling German peasant dance, the Ländler. When the dance was brought into the smooth-floored ballroom, the hopping and leaping movements were refined to smooth gliding steps. The important change in the dance was brought about not by the steps but by the way in which the partners held each other. For the first time the man held the woman in a close embrace.
The Polka was also popular in England and Europe beginning around 1840. Many believe the Polka was originally a Czechoslovakian folk dance. At social dances the Polka and Waltz appeared on the same program, and the gay hopping of the Polka contrasted with the smooth gliding steps in the Waltz. The Polka, like the Waltz, used the closed dancing position; and it, too, was considered indecent at first. By the middle
of the century, the Polka was performed in the United States, and very soon thereafter, the Polka and the Waltz began replacing the Contredanse and Cotillion at social affairs. At the end of the century, large and costly formal balls were going out of fashion and dancing areas were becoming smaller. With urbanization and increased industrialization, class systems crumbled further, everyone could dance, and dance halls flourished.

In the coming century, with the advent of Jazz, dance pre-eminence moved from Europe to the United States, where many changes occurred as dance gained greater freedom of expression. Early in the twentieth century, Ragtime, Dixieland Jazz, and the Blues gave music and social dance new rhythms. Ragtime, which was popular until around 1919, is characterized by its syncopated beat in the melody line. Dixieland Jazz evolved from Negro funeral marches and music played at bordellos in New Orleans. The music was primarily improvisational. Around 1920, white musicians began to play Dixieland Jazz in Chicago. The slow and melancholy Blues evolved from Negro spirituals and songs they sang at work. With these new rhythms, many new dances emerged.

The first Ragtime dance to appear was the One-Step. In the One-Step, the couple stood in the closed position; the man stepped forward on his left, the lady stepped back on her right, and the couple simply walked around the room without changing their position as they took a step on each beat. The
One-Step, and numerous other dances—often named after some animal, such as the Turkey Trot or the Grizzly Bear, whose roots can be traced back to Black Folk dances, were performed, popularized, and adapted by the foremost ballroom dancers of the early twentieth century, Vernon and Irene Castle. The Castles embellished the basic walking of the One-Step by rising on the balls of the feet, travelling in a smaller and smaller circle and occasionally giving a little backward kick. Their new dance, the Castle Walk, was the craze world-wide around 1914. A few of the other dances they popularized were the Hesitation Waltz, the Tango, the Maxixe, which Irene felt was too difficult for amateurs to master,11 and the Fox Trot.

The origin of the Fox Trot is credited to vaudeville performer, Harry Fox. Fox, born in California in 1882, performed in a circus, sang in vaudeville and cabarets, and appeared in a play, Mr. Frisky of Frisco, in San Francisco, before going to New York. Around 1906, he began his New York career with "Miner’s Burlesquer." He next appeared in his own show after which he performed in several musicals. In 1914 Fox had a song and dance act with a bevy of chorines, "American Beauties," who performed between film showings at the New York Theatre. In his act he trotted around with the " Beauties" to Ragtime music. At the same time, on the theatre’s rooftop, the Jardin de Danse, there were dance competitions and also performances by the Dolly Sisters. It is believed that Harry Fox performed his trot with one of the Dolly
sisters, Yansci, with whom he formed an act and later married. The audience called the dance they introduced Fox’s Trot. The Fox Trot had two new characteristics: "long gliding steps," with the heel sliding on the floor and an 180 degree turn, which the man made around the woman who pivoted on high-heeled shoes. The Foxtrot is done in ballrooms today; there are two official forms: slow Foxtrot and the faster version, the Quickstep.

The Tango was an imported dance that gained popularity in the United States around 1912. It originally had two forms: the Spanish and the Argentine. The first of the tangos originated in Spain as a solo female dance and was later performed by couples. It had little in common with the Tangos of today. The Spanish version, which was popular in the late 1800s, had heel work, and finger snaps, and sometimes the dancers played castanets. The Argentine Tango, which became popular in the U.S. around 1911, was called baile con corté, "the dance with a stop," when it was first danced in the infamous bordellos in Buenos Aires. The "stop" and the slow sensual movements were the result of the heaviness of the men's gaucho outfits, complete with spurred boot, and the women's long, full, ruffled skirts. Many modifications were made to the Tango, until the 1920s, when the steps were codified. The Tango remains with us today as a social, exhibition, and competition dance.

The beginning of the century had ushered in an era of
dance halls and dance crazes. More than one hundred new dances evolved, and hundreds of dance halls, restaurants, and gardens catered to the dancing public. Gradually, the dance halls acquired bad reputations--mainly from some of their promiscuous patrons--and finally, with the outset of World War I, dance fever declined. After the war, society's values changed. Life was to be lived; there were spontaneity, frivolity, and a new sexual freedom as Americans began the Roaring Twenties and the new Jazz Age.

The social dance that epitomized the Jazz Age and the sexual revolution was the Charleston. The roots of the Charleston can be traced back first to the African "Ashanti ancestor dance"15 which was embellished and translated into Negro dances that were done in the south in the early 1900s. The Charleston had been seen in shows from around 1922, but in 1923 it was danced by a male chorus to the newly composed song "Charleston," in the musical Running Wild. With that the Charleston was a hit, on and off the stage. Two innovations occurred with the Charleston: "For the first time a step was taken over generally by men..." and "the distinction between popular dances to watch," such as those performed at exhibitions by the Castles, "and popular dances to dance, was wiped out."16 Other social dances that were favored in the twenties were the Black Bottom, Varsity Drag, and the Lindy Hop.

The Lindy Hop, which was named in commemoration of Lindbergh's cross Atlantic flight in 1927, originated in the
Savoy Ballroom in Harlem, where the most skilled dancers would congregate to dance to the music of jazz bands. The couples competed with each other and improvised new acrobatic steps. The dance proper featured a basic syncopated two-step, which was followed by a breakaway section in which the couple separated to do their most outstanding feats. The breakaway section reintroduced the solo African style of dancing as opposed to the European tradition of couple dancing. The aerial and acrobatic Lindy, which revolutionized American dance, emerged in the following years as the Jitterbug, Jive, and Swing.

After the Great Depression, big bands that played swing came into prominence, and dance styles changed with the beat. The Lindy reappeared as the Jitterbug and was even more frenzied than its predecessor; there were other well-liked dances—the Shag, the Boogie Woogie, the Continental, and the Carioca. The Continental and Carioca were introduced to the public in films by the foremost ballroom dancers of the thirties, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Dance contests offering cash prizes were popular. Dance studios and ballrooms flourished. It seemed the whole world was dancing, but that was to change with World War II.

The mood of the War, the absence of men, and the added wartime responsibilities of women caused dance halls to close. Music changed; new slower songs were introduced, suitable for crooners and for the extremely intricate rhythms of modern
jazz. Few new dances emerged during the forties; instead U.S. servicemen transported American social dances abroad.

Ballroom dance was seen on television in the early fifties on American Bandstand and Arthur Murray’s instructional programs and dance contests. Initially, these programs did little to excite their audiences, nor did any new dances emerge from them. By the end of the decade, however, the reverse was true. In 1954, a music style Rock 'n' Roll that combined the rhythm and blues of the Blacks, was played and promoted by a disc jockey in New York. Singers and musicians began recording Rock, until it eventually overtook other genres on radio and television. Teenagers related to the words and the rhythms, which were performed with accompanying hip gyrations by Elvis Presley, and the youth of America began to dance to Rock ‘n’ Roll. Some of the dances that emerged during the fifties had their roots in dances from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century--the Mashed Potato, Fly, Chicken, and the Fish. Characteristically, rock dances seldom have a basic step. The steps are often improvised, are energetic, and have strong body movements. Dancers do not remain in the closed position but can dance separately, nor do they have to mirror each other’s moves. In the dances everyone can do his own thing. Because of the sensual movements, this form of dance provoked much consternation among parents and adults. Just as the Waltz had been forbidden more than a hundred years earlier, Rock ‘n’ Roll
dances were banned in some ballrooms.

Rock moved into the sixties with the Twist. Youth and adults alike were doing—the adults in New York City’s Peppermint Lounge. No longer did partners hold each other in an embrace as in early social dances; now they could dance alone and do their own steps. The Twist reflected the unisex and casual sex era, for in it there was indiscriminate leadership, and undulating partners changed at will. The hip-gyrating movements of the Twist stem from the sensual, undulating pelvic motions seen in dances of the Congo. More new dances appeared—the Frug, Monkey, Pony, and the Jerk. Social dances gained wide appeal and popularity from being seen in films, on the stage, and on television. Many popular television shows, such as Shindig and Hullabaloo, featured long-haired female Go-Go dancers, who danced in cages over the stage. By 1965, thousands of discothèques had opened where dancers performed the latest crazes to recorded music. Around this time rock music’s intention changed and began to reflect the mores of the rebellious youth. Acid rock appeared, and dancing became a psychedelic, improvisational affair that could be done with or without a partner. Toward the end of the sixties, the Beatles were the rage. Their lyrics were important and were meant to be heard; in addition, rhythms were intricate and not danceable. Consequently, no new dance styles emerged.

The beginning of the seventies saw a resurgence of
interest in couple's ballroom dancing, initiated by the Hustle. The dance, born in Black and Puerto Rican bars in New York, returned couples to the traditional closed-dance position. Line dances also became popular during the seventies; everyone could dance together and experience a feeling of camaraderie. Solo, no-contact dances were also done; this trend continued into the eighties.

Near the end of the twentieth century, values and morals are changing; and with these changes, a real and emotional need for a monogamous and caring relationship is appearing. Once again male and female dance in the closed position, and yet they retain their freedom of sexual expression. Two of the sensual dances of the eighties were the Lambada and "dirty dancing" (which was popularized in the film of the same name). International dance competitions can be seen annually on television in some areas; the type of dance seen in competitions is highly formalized and needs extensive training to master, unlike participant social dance that is done for pleasure.

Important standards for teaching and judging International Ballroom Dance that are adhered to even today were instituted in the twenties--1924, to be exact, and in England. In August of 1924, the Ballroom Branch of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing was formed. A group of five teachers realized that modern ballroom dance was based on natural body movements and no longer required the turned-
out ballet foot of the previous years. After their discovery, they codified steps and techniques such as "body sway, contrary body movement, and rise and fall," that would establish teaching techniques and give judges definitive rules for judging ballroom dance contests. The style that evolved is known as the English Style in Great Britain and the International Style in the United States. The four standard dances originally used in competitions were the Waltz, Fox Trot, Tango, and One-Step. Around 1927, the One-Step was replaced by the Quickstep, which was a quick Fox-Trot. Later competitions were expanded to include Latin American dances and a modified version of the Jitterbug and Boogie-Woogie called Jive.

Ballroom dancing can be seen in many films, but the dances are often theatricalized versions of the original form and provide little visual evidence of the true character of the dance. Some films show actual dance sequences, but they are usually brief and unnamed—the viewer is left to guess what the dance is. In contrast, the suggested film for viewing, The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle, a somewhat altered and glamorized biography of the famous couple, shows six actual dances that were favored in the early 1900s and names them. The first dance and the only one unnamed in the film is the Texas Tommy. At that time Tommy was synonymous with prostitute. The dance, performed to "Waiting for the Robert E. Lee," resembles an embellished Lindy hop, with spins
and an added kick and three hops on each foot. Next is the Castle Walk, a type of One-step in which the woman always travels backwards; the Tango, a slow a sensuous Argentine dance; the Fox Trot, with its slow, slow, quick, quick rhythm; the Polka, a spirited hopping dance set in a winter scene; the Maxixe, which was derived from a Brazilian Tango, and the gliding, turning Waltz. The dance music is also authentic; most of it dates from the period, with only one song written expressly for the film. Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers were cast as the Castles in the 1939 film; well-known film choreographer, Hermes Pan was the dance director; and Irene Castle designed the costumes.

English-born Vernon (Blyth) Castle was introduced to Irene Foote in 1910, while swimming at the Rowing Club. At that time, Vernon was appearing as a comedian in a show, and Irene was an aspiring dancer. They dated for a short time, before Vernon arranged for Irene to get a part in The Summer Widowers, the Lew Field’s show in which he was appearing. They married in 1911, and shortly thereafter, went to Paris to perform in a show. Because of financial problems, the Parisian show did not open as scheduled. When it finally did, Vernon’s comedic barbershop routine was a failure, so the Castles decided to do two American-fad dances, the Grizzly Bear and the Texas Tommy, in the show. This performance was the beginning of their extraordinarily successful dance career. Several months later, the Castles left the show and
began to perform their dances at a posh restaurant, the Café de Paris. The duo was an immediate success, and the clientele began to copy and perform all their dances on the Cafe's dance floor. In 1912 the Castles returned to New York and danced in shows and at social affairs. Their famous Castle Walk came about at a party in New York. Irene and Vernon "clowned around like taxi drivers taking a joy ride... instead of coming down on the beat as everyone else did [they] went up." The dance became the craze, and the Castles were well on their way to becoming the foremost ballroom dancers of the era.

By 1912 the Castles were quite the rage. Not only were they famous for their dancing, but also anything they endorsed, created, or did received international attention. They had a studio, the Castle House, where Vernon was paid $100 an hour for a lesson, and Irene innovated fashion trends. In 1913 Irene liberated women from pencil-thin hobble skirts when she wore "simple flowing gowns... with uncluttered lines and flowing sleeves." She preferred to wear this unrestricted type of dress when she danced—the style caught on and became a favored fashion for women's wear. Irene wore jodhpurs, and they became fashionable; she wore a Dutch cap, and it, too, became the thing to wear. Her most notorious innovation was her short, bobbed hair cut. She was to have her appendix removed and didn't want the nurses combing through her long hair, so she cut it off. Needless
to say, when she was released and appeared in public, her short bob came into vogue as the symbol of the liberated woman. In 1914 the Castles returned to Paris to perform but were caught in the beginning turmoil of the war. With a little finagling and a few pieces of gold, they managed to get to England and then returned to the United States. Back in New York they appeared in the Irving Berlin musical, Watch Your Step. They toured with the show until Vernon enlisted and returned to England. Irene continued to appear in Watch Your Step until 1916, when she appeared in the film serial, Patria. At the same time Vernon had become a pilot with the Royal Flying Corps and was flying on missions in Europe. Towards the end of the war, he was sent to Canada as a training instructor. In 1918 while training a young cadet, Vernon, in an effort to avoid a mid-air collision, crashed and was killed. (So ended the career of the world's most well-known ballroom dancers.)
NOTES


2. Quirey, 17.

3. Quirey, 47.


5. Frank, 80.

6. Frank, 111.


8. Stephensen, 15.


12. Stephenson, 34.

13. Quirey, 82.


16. Stearns, 112.

17. Stearns, 334.


19. Quirey, 96.
23. Silvester, 45.
25. Castle, 79.
27. Castle, 115.
CHAPTER III

TAP

Tap dance as we know it today is an American creation. At the turn of the century, tap was performed by youths, who competed against each other. Steps were embellished and new ones improvised. Where did it all begin? There is no single line of development; rather, history suggests that tap is a blending of several ethnic dance traditions.

One of tap’s ancestors is the Lancashire clog. In Lancashire, England, it was customary for eighteenth century factory workers to dance in clogs (shoes with insulating wood for soles) during factory breaks. In their efforts to outshine one another, the dancers created new steps. This gave birth to the tradition of tap challenges. The worker’s dance, known as the Lancashire Clog, had a style that was restricted to movements of the feet. Little attention was given to arm or body movements. As the dances became more difficult, the shoes were adapted. By the nineteenth century, "coppers," which augmented sounds, were attached to the shoes.

During the latter part of the eighteenth century, step dances were devised in Ireland. One of the most popular was the jig. There were two popular versions: the single, performed by one person, and the double, performed by a couple
or a group. The solo jigs often were done in small areas, such as a "half door and table." Accomplished dancers held their body erect, with their arms held stiffly at the sides. The Irish jig’s main area of concentration was, and is, quick intricate footwork.

The third possible ancestor of tap is African tribal rhythms. Unlike clog dancers, African dancers wear no shoes and their feet make little sound. Their dances are done with bent knees to the rhythms of pounding drums. They use body movements which generate from the hip or they use a carriage which resembles animals or warriors on a hunt.

These ethnic groups experienced each other’s dance styles for the first time on board ships carrying slaves from Europe to the New World. When the crew and African captives came on deck to dance and exercise, each observed the other. By the time the ship docked, a new dance form was ready for cultivation.

Many slaves were taken to plantations in the South, where they continued their native traditions of life and dance. In 1739 there was an uprising in Virginia, which led to the Slave Act of 1740. To ensure against further rebellion, the edict forbade slaves to send messages on their drums. The Blacks compensated by devising a series of foot-stamping and hand-clapping signals. When the clog dancers from the North visited the southern plantations, they were observed by the Blacks, who then began to integrate their footwork and native
rhythmic dance style into the clogs and jigs.

American tap dance began to take form during the early part of the nineteenth century. It was in New York, near Paradise Square, that Irish and Blacks met to trade steps and compete against each other. William Henry Lane, a free-born Black was the greatest dancer to emerge from that area. William Henry Lane, who became known as Master Juba, learned to dance from Uncle Jim Lowe, a specialist in jig and reel dances. By 1840 Minstrelsy (white men's impersonations of Blacks done in black face) was popular. Juba performed all the popular dances in minstrel shows. He also performed a jig of his own which combined Afro-American rhythms with the jig. In 1845 in the Ethiopian Minstrels, Juba gained the title of "The Greatest Dancer in the World." In 1848 he danced in London, where his fast footwork, with its intricate rhythms, had never been seen. Lane, the greatest nineteenth century innovator of tap, died in London in 1852.

Lane's foremost dance competitor was an Irishman, John Diamond. Diamond, a New Yorker, born in 1823, was an accomplished jig dancer. When he was twenty-one, he entered into a series of jig challenges with Lane. Jig contests, at that time, were strictly governed by three sets of judges; "style judges sat in the orchestra pit, time judges sat in the wings, and judges of execution sat under the stage." Diamond won an early contest in Boston, but after 1845, no records credit him as the victor.
Tap steps developed in Minstrelsy that survive in current tap repertoires; two of the favored steps were the Waltz Clog and the Essence. The Waltz Clog, with its 3/4 unsyncopated rhythm, was danced in wooden-soled shoes—clogs. The Soft Shoe was originally called Song and Dance because of the acts in which it appeared. It was performed in 6/8 time in flexible leather-soled shoes and was an American hybrid of the Waltz Clog and the Black Shuffle. The Soft Shoe was refined further and became known as the Essence of Old Virginia. Once refined, the Essence became the first professionally danced dance, which combined African and American techniques.8

The Buck and Wing, a syncopated combination of clog and soft shoe, was introduced in New York around 1880. Buck and Wing is believed to be the predecessor of rhythm tap.9

Minstrelsy faded in popularity after the Civil War. Performances that relied on parodies of Blacks were no longer in vogue. American tastes had changed, and the next major arena for tap became the vaudeville stage. In 1881 at the outset of vaudeville, performers were segregated: there was a White circuit and a Black circuit, each spawning new stars, steps, and techniques.

By 1915, the Time Step had become standard fare.10 It evolved from a rudimentary form of the Buck. Each dancer had his own version of the step and would use a few bars of it to set the tempo for the accompanists. Around 1920 the three tap
wing developed.\textsuperscript{11}

White vaudeville tappers, Frank Condos and Mateo Olvera, embellished the aerial wing step with five tap sounds on the descent. The stair dance, for which Bill Robinson later became renowned, was performed by Al Leach ca. 1880, and Harry Pilser ran up a wall, somersaulting over, long before the feat was seen in films.

Flash steps and Class Acts emerged. A flash step is an exciting acrobatic step, which was used at the beginning or conclusion of a routine. It was, and is, used to get attention and inspire applause. Flash steps that were in use during the early part of the nineteenth century were Over the Top (the standing foot jumps over the extended leg.) and Trenches (running steps, with the body held forward). On the white circuit, Pat Rooney brought additional flash steps into fashion: Falling Off the Log and Off to Buffalo.

On the Black vaudeville circuit, a new manner of dance emerged early in the century, from the elegance and grace Eddie Rector integrated into his dancing. The smooth and casual gait with which he moved broke the link between Black dance with the Negro Shuffle. Rector’s style evolved into the Class Acts of the thirties and thereafter.

John Bubbles, known as the Father of Rhythm Tap, inaugurated his own style of tap around 1922 at the Hoofer’s Club.\textsuperscript{12} Bubbles cut his tempo to half the time, using four beats to a bar instead of two. He combined techniques of Clog
with Buck to create a syncopated style. Bubbles divided off-beat rhythms with his heel drops and clicked the front of his toes together for additional emphasis.

Concurrently with vaudeville, there were revues and Broadway shows. In revues, chorus girls were seen tapping in unison in George White's Scandals, Errol Carroll's Vanities, and in the Ziegfeld Follies. Two eminent solo performers from the Follies were dimpled-knee Ann Pennington and Marilyn Miller.

Many of the same dancers who appeared in vaudeville and revues were seen on Broadway and then in films. With the advent of sound films in 1927, tap dancing was a natural genre to be exploited. Now the clarity of tap sounds could be reproduced in a sound studio and synchronized with the dancer's image on film. (Tapping is not recorded at the time of filming, rather, the sound is dubbed later in the process.)

For the accomplished tap dancer, clarity and rhythm are two essential elements of a performance. The early tappers gave little concern to any body movements that would enhance their appearance. This may be because many of the early tap dancers had limited formal training, especially ballet training, which, I believe, is the basis for all theatrical dance.

Artistic contributions of myriad outstanding tap dancers and choreographers can be seen in That's Dancing, 1985. The film, produced by Gene Kelly, is a compendium of routines from
various musicals. Only the biographies, styles, and philosophies of choreographers and dancers appearing in That's Dancing will be addressed.

Busby Berkeley (1895-1976) brought the film industry out of the doldrums after the Great Depression by creating a entirely new approach to filming musicals. Instead of filming production numbers as if seen in a theatre with a proscenium arch, Berkeley utilized the camera as an eye that could move among and above the dancers. To capture geometrical and kaleidoscopic formations made by the bodies below, he took the camera high above the performers on a monorail crane-camera device he developed. His new invention gave him not only a new vantage point but increased speed and ease in his overhead filming technique.

Berkeley did not elevate dance as an art form in film, rather he used close-ups of the chorines' smiling faces, sequential shots of their kicking legs, or abstract designs formed by their moving bodies far below his camera. Beautiful bodies, beautiful girls, and how and where they could be placed were Berkeley’s main concerns, not their dance expertise. Perhaps this is because he had little dance training himself. What training he did have, he learned by observing dancers during rehearsals.

Busby Berkeley, born in Los Angeles, toured with his theatrical family during his early childhood. From age twelve to seventeen, he was enrolled in a military academy. In 1917
he joined the army and was sent overseas. While in France he was assigned as a drill master. He created spectacular drills, which presaged his formation-like film routines. After the war ended he directed shows that toured in the Army camps that remained in Europe. When he returned to New York in 1925, Berkeley obtained his first directing position in Holka Polka. He directed Earl Carroll’s Vanities in 1928, in which he used for the first time, his soon-to-be characteristic bevy of girls in intricate formations. By the late twenties, Berkeley had received acclaim and ranked among the top dance directors of Broadway musicals.

Berkeley’s film career began in 1930. He was hired as the dance director for Samuel Goldwyn’s first sound musical, Whoopee. His filming techniques were born in this film: he insisted on using one camera instead of the customary four; he wanted close-ups; and he took the camera high above, to achieve his famous top-shot.

In 1933 Berkeley elevated the station of movie musicals with Warners’ film, 42nd Street. Thereafter, he was contracted to create a series of films, which began with Gold Diggers of 1933. From 1939 to 1943 he acted as director and choreographer for MGM. In 1943 Berkeley directed his first color musical, The Gang’s All Here, at 20th Century-Fox. He returned to Warners the following year, where he wanted to take over as producer and director. Jack Warner did not agree, and Berkeley was not hired.
Berkeley returned to Broadway in 1944, where he directed the unsuccessful Glad to See You. His personal life had become chaotic. His mother died; his marriage failed; and Berkeley slashed his throat and wrists. He recovered under psychiatric care and returned to films. In 1954 Berkeley retired in Palm Desert, California, with his sixth wife, Etta Judd. In 1970 he temporarily came out of retirement for a Broadway revival of No, No, Nanette. After its successful opening, Berkeley returned to Palm Desert, where he died in 1976.

That’s Dancing has excerpts from several of Berkeley’s films, which show his dance configurations, characteristic top-shots, segmented views, close ups, and innovative film effects. Many of his numbers have a surrealistic quality, in that the laws of nature do not apparently apply. Little dance is seen in Dames, in which the dancers create kaleidoscopic patterns by manipulating their bodies in their black and white costumes, nor is dance seen in The Shadow Waltz in Gold Diggers of 1933. In the waltz, a multitude of chorines enter playing violins, Berkeley blacks out the set, and the lighted violins seem to play and dance by themselves.

Tap dancing is seen in Berkeley’s favorite number, The Lullaby of Broadway, from Gold Diggers of 1935. One hundred dancers enter in lines and formations reminiscent of a military drill. They are filmed from a multitude of angles, some tilted, some from above, some through a transparent floor
from below. Chorines are filmed sequentially as they kick and fall back into their partner’s arms. Berkeley reverses the film, and the dancers rise, one-by-one, back to their beginning position. There is a challenge section, in which dancers on one side of the stage dance, then the others answer with their taps. To make this section more dynamic, Berkeley cut the sound of the three orchestras, so only the sound of two-hundred taps could be heard. Berkeley builds to the climax by inserting a male trio doing a variety of flash steps, including wings. The number finishes with the entire company tapping in unison.

Tap is seen in the archetypical backstage musical, 42nd Street. In the 42nd Street tap number, Berkeley created an entire story with his choreography; the excerpt, however, shows just a brief view of the scene. It takes place on Broadway and 42nd street and features the dancing of ingenue Ruby Keeler.

Ruby Keeler, 1909-1988, was born into a poor Catholic family who lived in Halifax, Nova Scotia. When she was three, the family of seven moved to New York. Ruby attended her first dance classes at school. When she was eleven, she enrolled in classes taught at a dance studio in New York. Ruby’s first dancing job came when she was fourteen. She lied about her age and appeared in George M. Cohan’s The Rise of Rosy O’Grady. She danced in various tawdry speakeasies from 1923 till 1927, when she became a chorus dancer on Broadway in
Bye Bye Bonnie. The following year she danced for Florenz Ziegfeld in Whoopee.

Ruby travelled to California to make several short films, and on one of her trips she met Al Jolson. The forty-four-year-old Jolson pursued nineteen-year-old Keeler, and they were married. Jolson endeavored to control Ruby’s life and performance options; consequently, she left the stage for two years. An offer to dance in 42nd Street brought Ruby out of retirement. She continued to appear in films, and in 1935, she appeared in Go Into Your Dance with her husband. The couple were never suited—she demure and innocent, he brazen and loud. In 1940 the marriage ended.

The following year Ruby found happiness in a new marriage. She retired from the stage for almost thirty years; however, in 1970 she received an offer to appear in the revival of No, No, Nannette. After some trepidation, the sixty-year-old Ruby returned to Broadway. She danced for two more years and then retired, for the last time.

Ruby Keeler’s tap style in the 42nd Street excerpt can be categorized as hoofing. She appears to have little, if any, ballet basis to her work. There is little attention paid to graceful arm or body movements. Her legs seem almost out of control. Her feet tread flatly and heavily on the roof of the cab on which she is dancing, yet she gets a number of tap sounds in her steps. Even though this excerpt does not show Ruby Keeler to advantage, she is considered one of the
outstanding dancers in the Busby Berkeley era of film.

Fred Astaire, the personification of a Class Act, dances to "I Won’t Dance," from *Roberta*, in 1935. Fred Astaire’s tap style is flat-footed, yet smooth, with a debonair attitude and body carriage. His dancing, whether it is tap or jazz, often has a ballroom dance feeling to it. This is most discernible by the way he places his foot on the floor. In each step he either uses a modified slide or places the foot down heel first.

Fred Austerlitz was born in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1899. His first experience with dance was as an observer in his sister Adele’s dance class. Although Fred would have preferred to play baseball, his mother took him and Adele, who was eighteen-months older, to New York where she enrolled them in dance classes. Once in New York, Mrs. Austerlitz also changed their name to Astaire, for she felt it was more suitable theatrically.

The children displayed talent and were cast in their first school production, *Cyrano de Bergerac*. The older and taller Adele played Cyrano and Fred donned a blond wig and satin dress to play the role of Roxane. In their next performance, the children danced on top of a tiered wedding cake. Adele worn the customary bridal gown, and Fred wore top hat and tails, attire which became a trademark.

The Astaires obtained their first paying job in 1907, in Keyport, New Jersey. They were paid $50 a week for their act,
"Juvenile Artists Presenting an Electric Musical Toe-Dancing Novelty." Their debut was a success, even though Fred's toe work did receive some criticism for its lack of masculinity.

The vaudeville circuit was the next venture for Fred and Adele. They began to refine their act and renamed it "The Astaires: Songs and Dances." While appearing in Los Angeles, the child labor laws caught up with the children, and they were forced to retire from the stage for two years. During this hiatus, they attended elementary school.

Fred and Adele returned to vaudeville for awhile, then in 1917, they appeared on Broadway in Over the Top. The show closed after ten weeks, but the Astaires were on their way to the top. They appeared in several Shubert revues and in various Broadway shows. In 1923 Fred and Adele agreed to dance in Stop Flirting, which was being produced in London. They received rave revues and became international stars. Fred and Adele's skyrocketing career continued for nine more years, until in 1932, Adele married Lord Charles Cavendish in London, and their partnership terminated.

After the split, Fred danced on Broadway in The Gay Divorcee. Fred's film career began in 1933. In January he made a screen test for RKO, and in May he signed a contract with RKO for Flying Down to Rio. Before Flying Down to Rio began, he had a small part in Dancing Lady with Joan Crawford, at MGM. Upon his return to RKO, he was paired with Ginger Rogers, who became his new dancing partner.
Ginger Rogers, whom Fred had previously known in New
York, was from Independence, Missouri. She appeared as a
Charleston dancer and toured the vaudeville circuit with her
act, "Ginger Rogers and the Redheads." When she was eighteen,
she played the ingenue lead on Broadway, in Top Speed. She
made a film, Young Man of Manhattan, then returned to Broadway
to star in Girl Crazy. In 1933 she was selected as Astaire’s
film partner.

Their partnership lasted for seven years, during which
time they danced in nine RKO musicals. They had a certain
chemistry between them that made them irresistible to the
movie-going audiences of the thirties. Their dances told a
story of romance: the initial attraction; the female’s
resistance; the male’s wooing; and finally, the conclusion,
when she succumbs to his charm and love is in bloom. Fred and
Ginger made their last RKO film, The Story of Vernon and Irene
Castle, in 1939. They each pursued their individual careers
until 1949, when they reunited for the last time in the film
The Barclays of Broadway.

Astaire’s legacy is more than the vast amount of cinema
footage available today. Because of his philosophies of dance
and the way it should be filmed, he elevated cinematic dance
to an artistic level. Astaire believed dances should be inte­
grated into the natural action of the plot. He did not want
the camera to capture extraneous material during a dance
sequence. He felt the dancer’s entire body should be seen at
all times, and he wanted the dancer to be seen from the same perspective as in a performance on stage. His ideas led to the development of "the Astaire dolly." This dolly allowed the dancers to be filmed a few feet from the floor, while the camera was pushed in unison with them. The function of the dolly is quite evident in the excerpts in That's Dancing. The dancers, although they are moving across and around the floor as they dance, remain near the center of every frame. Astaire's ideas of how dancers should be filmed are also apparent.

Astaire and Rogers do one tap duet in That's Dancing--the fast and energetic, "Pick Yourself Up," from Swing Time, 1936. The beginning of the number, in which Fred pretends not to know how to dance, is cut. Only the section where Fred proves he knows how to dance is shown. Ginger is delighted, and they do their duet, complete with exciting syncopated rhythms and tour jetés over fences.

Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, known as the "King of Black Tap," danced with Shirley Temple in The Little Colonel, 1935. Bill Robinson, born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1878, was dancing with touring shows by the time he was twelve. When he was twenty, he went to New York and danced in the Bowery and Coney Island restaurants. He appeared in vaudeville shows and eventually became one of a very few Blacks to entertain on the White circuit. In 1928 at age fifty, Robinson became an immediate success when he presented "Doin' the New Low Down
and performed a "stair dance," in Blackbirds, on Broadway.

The following year, Robinson toured Europe in Blackbirds. In 1930 he starred in the Broadway show, Brown Buddies, and the same year he appeared in his first film, Dixiana. "Bojangles" appeared in fourteen films, the last of which was Stormy Weather, produced in 1943. Robinson returned to New York, where he danced in Cotton Club shows and at the World's Fair. In 1940 he, the only Black in the show, had star billing in All in Fun.

Bill Robinson continued to dance and speak on behalf of Blacks for several more years. In 1946 Mayor William O'Dwyer declared April 29, Bill Robinson Day, in New York City.¹⁸ On November 26, 1949, Robinson died. More than a million of his fans and friends paid their respects as his body was transported from Times Square to Harlem, and a banner over the Palace Theatre read: "So Long, Bill Robinson. . . ."¹⁹

Bill Robinson's stair dance shows the different sounds and rhythms he could achieve by hitting his toes or dropping his heels on various parts of the steps. He dances with Shirley Temple, whom he taught to do the dance. In the second excerpt Robinson exhibits his casual and easy style. He uses little arm or body movements nor does he do any acrobatic steps. Perfect balance and control are used to tap out a variety of clear sounds. He takes tap onto the toes and makes each tap sound with clarity from his wooden-soled shoes.

Eleanor Powell dances in Broadway Melody, 1936, and in
Honolulu, 1939. Her style is close to the floor, that is, instead of hops and jumps, she drops her heels. Unlike a "hoofer," she moves with grace; her body bends into a characteristic backbend and she pirouettes with ease. Her technique has its basis in ballet which she studied in her childhood.

Eleanor Powell (1913-1982) studied ballet in her hometown, Springfield, Massachusetts. When she was thirteen, she began to dance professionally at the Ambassador Hotel in Atlantic City. Next, she appeared in New York nightclubs. On the same bill with her were tap dancers, and she discovered she disliked the look of tap.

In 1928 she appeared for a short time in the unsuccessful Broadway show, The Optimists. After the show closed, Powell auditioned and made rounds to booking agents. Soon she realized that in order to get a job, she would have to tap, so Powell's mother enrolled her for ten tap lessons at Jack Donahue's School in New York. Powell couldn't pick up the tap steps in class, and she still didn't like tap. When the time for the next class came, she was absent. Shortly thereafter, Donahue phoned and asked her to return for the next lesson. He recognized her problems, which were the turned-out legs and ballon acquired through ballet training. At the next lesson Donahue had an army belt with sand bags and attached them to Powell's legs, while she tapped. After several lessons, she had mastered tap; she had moved to the front of the class and was on her way to becoming the greatest female tap dancer of
the thirties and forties. Powell’s first film was *George White’s Scandals of 1935* for Fox. The following year she made her first MGM film, *Broadway Melody of 1936*, which led to a seven year contract. In 1943 she appeared in her first colored film, *Thousands Cheer*, and the same year she married Glenn Ford. Powell danced in *Sensations of 1945* then retired to enjoy life as a wife and mother of a son. Unfortunately, her marriage ended in 1959.

After many years of retirement, Powell made a comeback at the Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas in 1960. She was triumphant and appeared in clubs throughout the United States for four years. Once again Powell decided to end her career. From then on, she performed community services and counseled aspiring young dancers. In 1981 she received the first “Ellie Award,” from the National Film Society. The award, named after her, is given to an outstanding film musical performer each year. In 1982, Eleanor Powell died.

The Nicholais Brothers’ dancing in *Down Argentina Way*, 1940, is an example of a Flash Act. A Flash Act is up-beat, fast, athletic, energetic, and spontaneous. In addition to rapid tap steps, acrobatics, splits, and flash steps are used to bedazzle and excite the audience.

Fayard and Harold, six years younger, grew up in Philadelphia. As children, they watched the different acts while their parents played in the theatre band, but they had no formal dance training. Their first job was on a radio
program, after which they appeared in local theatres. In 1932 they opened at the Cotton Club in New York, where they did their song and dance act for two years.

In 1934 they danced in *Kid Millions*. After filming *Kid*, they worked alternately in Hollywood and Broadway. They went to London with the musical revue, *Blackbirds*, and once more divided their time between California, New York, and abroad. They made nine feature films during their screen career, which ended with *The Pirate* in 1948.

Most people remember Ray Bolger as the Scare Crow in *The Wizard of Oz*. In addition to a film excerpt from that most memorable film, Ray Bolger dances in a style called Eccentric tap. Eccentric tap is comedic with legs that look rubbery or stiff. Movements are often extreme and done with an off-balance alignment. In one part of Bolger’s number, he pulls his torso up to make his legs look exceptionally long. In another step, he folds his legs up to the side and jumps from one foot to the other until he lands in a man’s arms. The entire number is comedic in style and intent.

Ray Bolger (1904) was born and raised in Dorchester, Massachusetts. His family was not involved in theatre, and he did not receive any dance training until he was in his late teens. His interest in dance grew from observing live theatre performances, so after finishing high school, he traded his bookkeeping skills for dance classes.

His first stage performance in 1922 launched him on a
professional career. Bolger had choreographed his own dance number and was spotted by an agent who took him into his touring company. He left the company after two years to tour on the vaudeville circuit, and in 1926, he danced in his first New York musical, The Passing Show of 1926.

Bolger’s big break came in 1936, when he danced George Balanchine’s "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue" in On Your Toes, and he made his first film, The Great Ziegfeld. From then on Bolger appeared alternately on Broadway and in films until World War II. During the early forties, he entertained U.S. servicemen stationed overseas. After the war Bolger returned to Broadway, films, and later television.

Gene Kelly and Donald O’Conner do a comedic, athletic tap dance in the 1952 musical, Singing in the Rain. In "Moses Supposes," which Kelly choreographed, Kelly and O’Conner jump from a table, tap while seated on a chair, and exhibit rapid, multiple tap sounds with complex rhythmic patterns. Energy, energy, energy—with a certain nonchalance—is the characteristic quality of this pair.

Gene Kelly (1912) is from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. When Gene was little more than an infant, he was given music and dance lessons, much to his chagrin, because he grew up in a rough neighborhood, where dancing was not considered a masculine activity. Gene would have preferred to play sports instead of going to lessons or entertaining house guests on his violin and with dance. When he was eight, he discontinued
dance. Seven years later his interest was kindled, when he discovered that his dancing made him popular with girls. Kelly enrolled at Pennsylvania State College in 1929 and finished four years later with a Bachelor of Arts degree. During his college years his interest in dance and performing grew, and after graduation, he opened his own dancing school in the basement of his house. Eventually his school, The Gene Kelly School of Dance, moved to a studio.

In 1937 Kelly went to New York, where he unsuccessfully tried to find work as a choreographer. In 1938 he returned to Pittsburgh and was hired to choreograph Hold Your Hats. The same year he returned to New York and was cast in Leave It To Me. A short time later he won a leading role in One for the Money. In 1939 Kelly danced in his own choreography in The Time of Your Life, a show which won a Pulitzer Prize, and he rose to stardom in 1940 in Pal Joey. One year later, after his success in Pal Joey, he went to Hollywood. His first film was For Me and My Girl, after which he appeared in several more productions. In 1944 he enlisted and served in the United States Naval Air Service for two years. He returned to MGM, where he would act, dance, sing, direct, and produce for sixteen years. When he ended his contract with MGM, Kelly went on to work for Warners, appeared in and produced films for television, and choreographed for the Paris Opera. Gene Kelly’s legacy is great: he brought cinematic dance to an artistic level. He integrated choreography naturally within
the plot and the environment, and he brought acceptance and masculinity to the male dancer.

Donald O'Connor's tap style mirrors Kelly's in "Moses Supposes," for to do otherwise would distract from the number's uniformity. Donald O'Connor was born into a theatrical family in 1925. He appeared on the vaudeville stage in his family's act when he was three and continued to perform with them for several years. During the Great Depression, the family took any performing job available just to survive. In 1938, Paramount Studio hired Donald to sing, dance, and act in Sing You Sinners. After a year's contract with Paramount, Donald returned to perform with his family for two years, after which he signed a contract with Universal Pictures. He began his career with Universal in 1942 playing minor roles, and by the following year, he was given the lead in Top Man. His career was interrupted by a two-and-one-half-year commitment with the army, which began in 1944. During this time, he performed for the troops, and in 1947, he returned to Universal to film Something in the Wind. O'Connor continued his alliance with Universal until 1950, and then he played the role of Cosmos Brown in MGM's Singin' in the Rain. After his success in Singin' in the Rain, he appeared on television and made films for MGM, 20th Century Fox, and Paramount, where, in 1956, he made his final musical, Anything Goes. O'Connor appeared in several more films and then returned to perform on the stage and television.
Ann Miller is the last dancer seen in That’s Dancing who achieved stardom primarily because of her outstanding tap. She appears in a "Tom, Dick, and Harry" from Kiss Me Kate, 1953, and is backed by a trio composed of Bob Fosse, Bobby Van, and Tommy Rall. Ann Miller’s tap style is similar to Eleanor Powell’s in that she achieves multiple tap sounds in a close-to-the-floor-technique. She does not exhibit the acrobatic flair of Powell nor does she display extreme balletic grace. Her dances are filled with rapid-fire taps, flashy presentation, and a broad show business smile. The floor-length costume and the theme of "Tom, Dick, and Harry," prevent us from viewing Miller’s characteristic long-legged percussive routine.

Ann Miller believes she inherited psychic gifts from a relative, and she believes in a childhood prophecy given to her mother many years ago by a gypsy who said: "I see a Star of Destiny here. This child will have her name in lights and she will be a star for many years. I see music and lights and dancing and money. . . . You will remember my words, when you see her name up there in lights."24

Ann Miller (1923) from Houston, Texas, was named Johnny Lucille Collier at birth, because her father had wanted a son. As a small child, Ann’s mother sent her to ballet class to straighten her legs curved by rickets. In addition to ballet, she also took piano and violin lesson and hated them all. Ann’s first interest in dance came when she visited Bill
"Bojangles" Robinson backstage at the Majestic Theatre in Houston. She danced for him, and then he showed her some tap steps, which she copied with ease. She continued to tap, and when she was about eight, went to her first local authentic dancing school.

In 1934 Ann’s mother took her to Hollywood for the summer and enrolled her in dance classes at Fanchon and Marco’s Dancing School. Then she entered her name at Central Casting and was cast as an extra in two films, The Good Fairy and Ann of Green Gables. After the films, she appeared in a revue All Aboard, after which the summer vacation ended, and Ann and her mother returned home. Shortly after their return, they discovered Mr. Collier in a compromising position with another woman in the bedroom, so back to Hollywood they went, where Ann continued her tap lessons. When Mrs. Collier could not afford tap classes for Ann, William Morgan let Ann practice in his dance shoe shop. He also gave her her first pair of shoes with metal taps (she had used wooden-soled shoes before, just as Robinson had used and suggested for her), and he arranged for her to perform at various men’s clubs. She was given a pianist to accompany her, and it was he, Harry Fields, who suggested changing her name from Lucille Collier to Ann Miller. Ann’s break came in San Francisco during one of her performances at the Bal Tambarin, when she was noticed by an RKO talent scout. Ann, who was tall for her age, five foot seven, had been adding years to her age in order to work since
she was eleven; now, in 1937, she officially added four years to a forged birth certificate to qualify for a screen test at RKO. After the test, she appeared in *New Faces of 1937, Stage Door* and in 1938 she had a lead role in *City Revels*. In 1939, Miller went to New York to appear in George White's *Scandals of 1939* and the following year she returned to Hollywood, where she appeared in films for RKO, Republic, and Columbia. At Columbia, she was cast in her first star vehicle, *Reveille with Beverly* in 1943. She continued her alliance with Columbia until 1946 when she appeared in *The Thrill of Brazil*. In 1948 she made her first MGM and her first Technicolor film, *Easter Parade*. She stayed with MGM until 1958, after which she appeared on TV in shows and a Heinz Soup commercial; she had leading roles in musicals revisions, and in 1979 she opened on Broadway in *Sugar Babies*, age fifty-six. At fifty-six, Ann Miller still possessed the long lovely legs that had become famous through Walter Winchell's columns. (He had called her "Legs" in a favorable critique he had written of a 1939 performance.) She could still hammer out her drum-like taps. And above all, she had fulfilled the prophetic words of the gypsy: "This child will have her name in lights and she will be a star for many years."

NOTES


5. Stearns, 45.


7. Ibid.

8. Stearns, 50.


10. Stearns, 177.

11. Stearns, 192.


15. Adler, 16.


17. Stearns, 181.

19. Slide, 125.
20. Thomas, 262.
22. Thomas, 244.
25. Miller, 49.
27. Miller, 16.
CHAPTER IV

JAZZ

As an art form, jazz dance is distinctly American; it is wedded to the syncopated beat of jazz music. Professional jazz is the outgrowth of social dance, and as tempos, styles, rhythms of music change, dances change accordingly. Though hard to define, jazz dance is characteristically sensual and earthy and lends itself well to expressions of emotion. Body isolations are indicative of the genre and it is often done in plié, with the feet in a natural position.¹

Jazz dance resulted from the blending of African tribal dances with European folk and ballroom dances. From African dances, jazz inherits the characteristic plié (bent knee) position, the flat-footed style, centrifugal movements that generate outward from the hip, improvisation, and dynamic rhythms.² When slaves were brought from Africa to America, they danced on their ship’s deck, as did the crew, and each observed the other’s dances. Before reaching America, slaves were taken temporarily to islands in the West Indies so they could adjust to the new environment of their final destination. While on the islands, the slaves observed such European court dances as the Quadrille and Contradanse. They copied the floor patterns and the steps, and then added their own
pelvic and shoulder movements. The slaves transformed European folk dances, such as the Schottische, in the same way—by adding pelvic movements. From the blending of Black and European dance traditions, a new dance form began which evolved into today’s theatrical jazz dance.

When slaves came to America, many were taken to plantations in the south, where Afro and American dance styles continued to blend. Plantation slaves watched their white masters going through the stately stepped formations of the Quadrille, and then mimicked and satirized their movements in their own version of the dance. The product of the fusion appeared in social dances that eventually were professionalized and taken to the stage. After this time, social and jazz dance foundations were inseparable. A famous dance that is the outgrowth of the Afro-American fusion is the Cakewalk. It was popular during the Minstrel era (c. 1820–1900) and was performed to Ragtime music. Originally, the dance was performed in contests. Couples strutted in circular formations, then separated, improvised kicks and turns, rejoined, then promenaded again. Judgments were made and the best couple would “take the cake.” Later, the dance was seen in Minstrel shows, where white men blackened their faces with burnt cork and copied the dances of the blacks. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Cakewalk was even a more robust dance. In its improvisational solo section, anything could be done from Russian dancing to tap; however, the end always re-
tained its circular processional strut. The Cakewalk was popular at home and abroad and paved the way for the ragtime dances that followed.⁶

Ragtime, Dixieland jazz, and the Blues were popular musical genres from approximately 1859 through the 1920s. After the decline of Minstrelsy in the early 1900s, many new dances emerged with movements that duplicated the syncopated beat of Ragtime and Dixieland jazz. The Charleston and the Black Bottom, two outstanding dances of the twenties, were derived from southern Negro dances. The Charleston and Black Bottom were social dances, danced by amateurs and professionals alike. They became celebrated when introduced in professional musical productions. The Black Bottom became the rage when it was introduced by Ann Pennington in George White's *Scandals of 1926.*⁷ The theatrical version had slides, "hobbling steps,"⁸ undulations, hops, and slaps on the backside. The theatrical version was toned down but retained the bottom slaps. The Charleston, the most popular dance of the twenties, preceded the Black Bottom. Originally, the dance was done as early as 1903 by blacks in the south, then later it was danced in contests, in nightclubs, and performed in various musicals. It gained wide appeal when it was seen in George White’s *Runnin’ Wild,* a Black show that opened in 1923. A male chorus performed the dance with hand-claps and foot stamps for accompaniment. The hand crossing and uncrossing on the knees, a distinctive Charleston gesture, is derived from a native
African movement. Around 1925, the Charleston craze subsided, and by the end of the twenties, new dances appeared.

In the beginning of the thirties, ballroom floors, Broadway musicals, and sound films were fertile grounds for new jazz dances. In the ballrooms, couples were competing in marathons, doing the lively jitterbug. On Broadway, The Band Wagon, choreographed by Albertina Rasch in 1931, featured dances by Fred and Adele Astaire, and in 1936, choreographer George Balanchine introduced a narrative jazz ballet, "Slaughter of Tenth Avenue," in On Your Toes. Hollywood produced a multitude of Busby Berkeley dance films including Goldiggers of 1933, 1935, and 42d Street. In the same decade, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers were dancing to syncopated beats in Top Hat, 1935, and Swingtime, 1936, to name just two examples. By the end of the thirties, ballet and modern dance melded with syncopated social dances and formed a distinct and professional genre.

Jack Cole, referred to as the "father of jazz dance," created a dance technique which became the model for jazz dance on Broadway, television, nightclubs, and films. Unlike the contemporary choreographers who blended elements of ballet with tap or modern, Cole fused Oriental and modern movements with Black jazz dance. Jack Cole (1914-1974) began his dancing career in 1930 with modern dancers Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn. Two years later, he joined Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman. After seeing St. Denis's pseudo-Oriental
dances, Cole began to research various ethnic dances, costumes, and cultures so that he could accurately represent ethnic dance movements. The style he created used various body isolations, rapid directional changes, dynamic energy changes, and sensuous or animalistic movements.

Cole organized a group of dancers who appeared in nightclubs; then he danced and choreographed on Broadway and worked for MGM and Columbia films. In 1944, while at Columbia, he founded the first permanent dance company for films. The twelve dancers in the company rehearsed six hours a day to acquire Cole's technique. Cole was a demanding teacher and choreographer, who expected perfection from his dancers. The fruits of his labor produced lead dancers Gwen Verdon, Carol Haney, Barrie Chase, and Matt Mattox, to name a few, and inspired many future dancers and choreographers. Cole's Broadway choreographic credits include Kismet, Jamaica, Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, and Man of La Mancha. A few of the films he choreographed are Tonight and Every Night, The Jolson Story, Down to Earth, Meet Me After the Show, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, There's No Business Like Show Business, Les Girls, and Let's Make Love.

By the late forties and early fifties, jazz dance had supplanted the popularity of all other genres of dance on Broadway and in films. Two outstanding dancers/choreographers, Jerome Robbins and Bob Fosse, began to dominate Broadway and film credits. Jerome Robbins (1918) was born in
New York. He studied ballet, modern, Spanish, and Oriental dance, violin, piano, and acting. He danced on Broadway from 1938 to 1940, then in 1940 he joined the American Ballet Theater. In 1941 he became a soloist at A. B. T., and four years later, he choreographed his first work for them, Fancy Free. Fancy Free was a contemporary one-act ballet set in New York City. It is about three sailors on leave, pursuing girls. The costumes were 1944 typifications, and the dance expression was not classical ballet but theatricalized social dance—jazz ballet. The same year Fancy Free was expanded and became On the Town, a Broadway book version of the ballet, which Robbins choreographed. In 1949, the film version of On the Town was released. Robbins was associate artistic director of the New York City Ballet between 1949-1959; during that time, he choreographed The King and I (1951), Peter Pan (1953), Bells are Ringing (1956), and West Side Story (1957). His participation in West Side Story paved the way for the emergence of the choreographer/director in musicals on Broadway and thereafter in film. When West Side Story opened in New York one name dominated the credits, "conceived, choreographed, and directed." The name was Jerome Robbins. For the first time, with an accomplished and experienced dancer at the helm, dance was elevated to a lofty position. In West Side Story, dance with all its dramatic possibilities became as important—if not more important—than the spoken word. In 1961 Robbins, co-directing with Robert Wise, adapted his choreography for
the screen. The film version of *West Side Story* (music by Leonard Bernstein, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, and book by Arthur Laurents), which will be discussed at the end of the chapter, won a record number of eleven Oscars.

Bob Fosse was a celebrated dancer/choreographer from the fifties until his death in 1987. Fosse was born in Chicago in 1927. At the age of nine, he began to study tap at the Chicago Academy of Theater Arts, and by the time he was in high school, he was performing professionally in Chicago nightclubs. Still in his teens, Fosse formed an act, the Riff Brothers, in which he tap danced with a partner, Charles Grass, in vaudeville and burlesque. His early exposure to the vulgarity of the acts in the sleazy burlesque clubs is revealed in the sexuality of his later choreography in such shows as *Sweet Charity*, and *All That Jazz*.

Fosse enlisted in the navy in 1943. In 1945 he was assigned to the Navy’s Special Services entertainer division and performed for the troops in the Pacific. The following year he ended his duty with the Navy and went to New York to continue his dancing career. His first show was with the road company of *Call Me Mister*, where he met dancer Mary Ann Niles. Fosse and Niles married in 1947 and later formed an act, in which they appeared together in nightclubs, on television, and in their first Broadway show, *Dance Me a Song*, in 1950. The following year, they divorced, and Fosse married dancer Joan McCracken, whom he had met in *Dance Me a Song*. McCracken
urged Fosse to perfect his art, and he began to take classes with Anna Sokolow, José Limon, and Charles Weidman. In addition, he enrolled in the American Theater Wing and studied "acting, diction, ballet, singing, and choreography." In 1953, Fosse went to Hollywood and was cast in three films: *Give a Girl a Break*, *The Affairs of Dobbie Gillis*, and *Kiss Me Kate*. McCracken, who had accompanied Fosse to Hollywood, ended her dancing career because of illness but continued to urge Fosse to choreograph. Although McCracken was supportive of Fosse's endeavors and was instrumental in launching his Broadway career, the two eventually separated and divorced (McCracken died in 1961). In 1954, Fosse choreographed the first of thirteen Broadway Musicals, *Pajama Game*, and in 1955, he choreographed *Damn Yankees*, the show in which he met his third and last wife, Gwen Verdon. Fosse and Verdon worked together the following year in *New Girl in Town* and in 1959 he began his career as a director/choreographer with *Redhead*, also starring Verdon. In 1960, Verdon and Fosse married. Their marriage, too, was destined to failure; however, their friendship endured until the end of Fosse's life.

Fosse's talents were seen on Broadway and in film. His dance style is sensual, often erotic. His numbers can be acrobatic in nature or filled with staccato jazz poses. Fosse said his technique was developed to cover his flaws: a slouch and inarticulate fingers. His numbers often are satirical, such as the operating scene in *All That Jazz*, and he is
associated with the use of a derby, hat, and white gloves. Fosse lived life to its fullest—or rather abused life to its fullest. He used drugs, alcohol, and had liaisons with many women. When his abuses, coupled with his stressful responsibilities took their toll Fosse suffered a heart attack. He refused to alter his life style—even increased his excesses. In 1987, when he was on his way to the opening night performance of a revival of *Sweet Charity*, Fosse suffered a fatal heart attack. Irreverent variations on themes and events of Fosse’s life can be found in *All That Jazz*, the 1979 film he directed, choreographed, and co-wrote.

Many film musicals feature jazz dance; however, *West Side Story* is recognized as a watershed in the evolution of the American musical because of its emphasis on music and dance. Not only is dance integrated into the plot, it is used extensively to express emotions, set moods, and forward the story line. Jerome Robbins took as point of departure William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. The feuding families of Verona, the Montagues and Capulets, are replaced by the feuding Sharks and Jets, rival Puerto Rican and American gangs that stalk the street of New York’s West Side. Within the cultural peculiarities, Robbins created a work which incorporates naturally two contrasting ethnic dance styles. Some of the principal players are given counterparts: Juliet has her counterpart in the quiet, virtuous Maria; Paris, Juliet’s suitor, has his counterpart in the swarthy Chino; Romeo is
replaced by the well-meaning Tony. Fiery Anita, Maria's best friend, has no counterpart nor does Bernardo, Maria's brother and Anita's betrothed. Names, nationalities, and surroundings are changed and modernized. The atmosphere, however, remains unchanged. It is filled with tension and violence, broken only briefly by moments of tranquility.

The "Prologue," lengthened in the film but thematically consistent with the stage production, sets the mood and initiates the conflict between the Sharks and the Jets. After the overture a lone, desolate, human whistle is the first sound heard, while simultaneously a long overhead shot reveals a hushed New York lying far below. Traffic is sparse and moves as slowly and hauntingly as the sound of the unseen whistler. Drums begin to sound intermittently, a finger snaps on the beat, there is a feeling of anticipation. Cinematographer, Daniel Fapp's camera swoops down isolating first a cluster of Jets, then their leader Riff whose snapping fingers are the only sounds to be heard.

Robbins creates contrasting moments of tension and temporary tranquility by varying dynamics, spatial arrangements, and levels within his choreography. By varying these elements of dance, the choreography evokes various emotional responses that reflect the ever-changing tenor of plot. The repertoire of steps is limited consisting mainly of jazz walks, chassés, châinés, tours en l'air, lunges, and battement à la second. The battement a la second is used to introduce
many mood changes. Its variety of execution, coupled with the universality of gesture, clarifies each mood.

Robbins chose to have fingers snap powerfully on the second beat of the measure in lieu of a cooler syncopated snapping beat. This immediately sets up a powerful and threatening opening. Movement and immobility are used intermittently to build tension during the non-dance beginning of the number. Dancing is seen for the first time when the Jets cockily move onto the street. A battement à la second is done one by one, then two together. Arms are lifted only shoulder high, sustained. The movements transmit a feeling of insecurity, as if they are not at ease nor trusting enough to dance at all. Chassés are done one by one, then two by two, crisscrossing on the diagonal. All the dancers sauté into the air in unison. Battement à la second is used again, but the dynamics are altered to underscore the Jets' unity. Movements are strong; bodies are uplifted as one arm extends overhead. Jaunty little step touches twisting side to side are added to the chassés to express the Jet's cockiness. A tour en l'air joins the whole group in unison dance. Abruptly, they stop and freeze.

Bernardo's appearance is the catalyst for all to cease. His determined face looks out at the viewer. Two Sharks walk with him. The sound of snapping fingers is their accompaniment. They chassé directly toward the camera, and as the mood lightens, turns are added. Bernardo and the Sharks forcefully
execute a battement à la second. Movements are percussive, interspersed with lunges. The dance abruptly ends as opposing gang members meet, face to face.

The mood changes and becomes bright. The Jets mirror the mood with a battement à la second, taking it en l'air. The gangs meet and withdraw and a playful mood ensues.

The dancers use more ballon (elevation); the chassés cover more space as the entire group of Jets springs from side to side. They jump over each other leap frog fashion, slide, walk, play and cavort. Two hands reach out to capture a thrown ball; everything stops. In the tenseness that the sudden stillness has created, we realize the hands belong to Bernardo.

There is a staged non-dance section in which the two groups confront and flee from each other. The tempo increases, and the Jets dance. Their steps cover greater space; jazz walks become lower in plié; and fingers percussively snap on the upbeat to reflect the added intensity. Chaos erupts and fighting and dancing are interspersed. A shrill police whistle is heard, another blast from the whistle and the "Prologue" ends.

"The Dance at the Gym" choreographically reflects ethnicity, sets moods, forwards the plot, and foreshadows the end of the play. The Jets jitterbug to rock music, the Sharks mambo to Latin rhythms, and both groups dance together in both styles and in a slower stately section to the song "Maria."
In the beginning of the dance, Maria swirls through time and space, out of the dress shop in which she works. As she turns, her figure becomes abstracted and is joined by other abstracted figures bathed in bright light. When the dancers come into focus, they are the Jets. The couples are randomly spaced and dance a stylized rock routine. Their movements are lazy and sensual. They reach up with both arms then easily drop into a plié. In contrast, a breakaway section features a couple doing turns and a bit of floorwork. Both sections add authenticity to the style of dance seen at that time. The dancing becomes coarser; couples gyrate as the music harshly blares on. One couple heavily does a one-step, breaking from the uniformity of the group. They progress out of sync, until a slap on the derriere from Riff brings them back into step with the sensuality of the group. Symbolically Riff implies that they are on beat with the music but they are out of step with the group. The dancers continue with the sensual pelvis-gyrating routine.

The dancing is interrupted by the Sharks entrance. A confrontation seems imminent but is postponed when Gladhand requests a get-together dance. Ethnic groups divide to opposite sides of the stage. After their leaders take their places in a circle on the floor, the girls join on the inside, boys on the outside, and they walk in two counter circles. A burst of the whistle, and the mambo begins. Contrary to the intended ethnic mix, Bernardo, Riff, and a Jet do an ostenta-
tious port de bras to rejoin their original partner. All segregate. No longer is the mood sensual; rather, it is fierce and the movements become percussive.

Shark women raise one hand overhead and chug forward in paso doble fashion. Two lines of Sharks, one male, one female, are formed from upstage to downstage and dance together. The Jets join the dance and the style changes to rock. The two lead couples do a breakaway challenge section. Steps are acrobatic; lifts are executed. Eventually the entire ensemble joins in and each couple shows its virtuosity in individual steps.

The mood changes; the music fades as the camera goes into soft focus to isolate Tony and Maria. They stand together, unconscious of their surrounds as if in a dream. Their mutual attraction causes them to sway in, recover and sway out, in and out. Other dancers join behind. The style is refined and courtly, a style reminiscent of a time long ago, in places far away, where all people danced in harmony. This refined interlude of Sharks and Jets coming to terms with each other's ethnic individuality foreshadows the close of the drama, when once again intense emotion will create a need for them to walk side by side.

With both Sharks and Jets dancing, the music and movements are no longer sensual; they are soft, almost shy. Floor patterns are symmetrical, dance dynamics are lyrical and sustained, and movements are mirrored to reflect the
tranquility and accord of the drama. The wild pelvic isolations that were previously done by the Jets are modified to a modest rotation which originates from the knees. Tony and Maria become visually and emotionally isolated from the ensemble as their dialogue begins. Maria gently lifts her hand to Tony’s cheek, they are about to kiss. Chords begin to pound. The pounding intrusion brings the ensemble back into focus. They pass in lines, marching robot-like, with one arm stiffly outstretched. Faster and faster they march, until a shrill whistle blast stops their movement and changes the mood.

The climate becomes volatile as Bernardo and Riff argue. Dancers, acting as a foil for the principal characters, dance a toned-down rock dance. They move easily and do not distract. They function to bring the dream-like quality of the previous moment back to the harsh reality of life. The world of the gym fades, and the number ends.

The film version of "America," unlike its Broadway predecessor, utilizes the talents of both males and females in its song and dance. "America" can perhaps be described as comic relief, for it releases the relentless tension that has been generated since the opening number. For the first time the Sharks dance in an ethnically exclusive group. The women appreciate aspects of America and want to remain; the men think and feel differently. Although their opinions differ, they are the same. This is a time when they can let their
defenses down, relax, cajole, banter, and just have some plain old girl/boy type fun. Choreographically there are few changes in style or mood. The dance style is a combination of Latin and flamenco. The movements are strong, percussive, and syncopated. The women clap their hands, stamp their feet, and toss their skirts. The men emulate a matador, do heel work and stag leaps. There is a section in which the men challenge the girls in dance, then they all dance in unison. Next rondo form is used in which one side of the stage does a movement, then the other mirrors their move. To conclude the dance, the Sharks and their women rush toward each other and finish with shoulder lifts.

"I Feel Pretty," which opened the second act in the Broadway production, is a light interlude which allows the viewer a bright beginning and a moment of relaxation from the preceding tense drama. There is little actual choreography. The movement may very well fall into the category of staging. Maria and the female ensemble do Latin-type dance steps consisting of heel work, hand clapping, and maneuvering skirts. All is playful as they frolic through dress racks.

"Cool" reflects the drama of the plot. In the original stage version, "Cool" preceded the "Rumble;" in the film version it follows it. This change of placement makes the Jets' lack of unity more understandable. For the first time, the Jets are facing the reality of death--the death of their friend and leader. For the first time they are no longer a
group. Now each person is on his own and has to come to grips with and cope with the uncertainty of the future.

The Jets gather inside a garage after the deaths of both Bernardo and Riff and try to regain some semblance of composure and order in a time when their world is in chaos. Their moods and thoughts are discordant, explosive--so too is their dance. In the beginning, Action briefly dances alone. His steps are strong and percussive, then he uses a gesture which is prevalent throughout "Cool." One hand is thrust upward percussively with the palm open; then in a sustained and forceful movement, it is lowered with the hand clenched into a fist--the lowering is finalized with a body contraction. The bursting, then sustained motion, illustrates the explosive emotions of the Jets, which erupt through their valiant efforts to remain calm. Arab moves forward. His anxiety is expressed in percussive, angular, and contracted dance movements. He finishes with the percussive reach up and sustained pull down. The Jet women more forward, dance, then repeat the same hand motion. Now, the dancers dance solo, duet, trio, and ensemble concurrently. They all face different directions and do different steps, which reflect the mental anguish and chaos of their hearts and souls. The dance style for some is jazz; for others it is the partnered rock style seen in "Dance at the Gym." Verbal "pow" are heard in conjunction with percussive moves. Finally, the Jets dance in unison; however, there is no central focus--each dancer faces
a different direction. Dancing stops; singing begins; eventually they all join in snapping their fingers on the second beat of the measure. Once united the beat is strong and reinforces their renewed strength as a group. They merge in a circle. Only their fingers’ snapping—now on every beat—and an occasional pow are heard as they leave the garage and move outdoors. Outside, with their emotions in check, the music and dance end.
NOTES


2. Stearns, p. 15.


5. Stearns, p. 124.


7. Stearns, p. 110.

8. Stearns, p. 111.


CONCLUSION

Within the limited scope of this work, I have first supplied the reader with a survey of the history of the dance genres used in musicals—ballet, ballroom, tap and jazz—then concluded with suggested films representative of each genre. The history of ballet, the oldest of the theatricalized dance forms, is traced from the sixteenth century, when Catherine de Medici brought her native Florentine dancers with her to France, to the contemporary twentieth-century ballets of Balanchine and Agnes de Mille. The evolution of ballroom dance is sketched from the chain dances of the twelfth century B.C. to the no-contact rock dances and closed couple dances of the twentieth century A.D. The origins of tap dance are found in nineteenth-century European ethnic and African tribal dances. The evolution of is traced from its ancestral jigs and clogs to the current styles performed by artists in the United States. Jazz, the youngest and last dance genre addressed, also has its roots in Europe and Africa. Its evolution is traced from its inception to the jazz dance styles seen in the twentieth-century.

People have danced presumably from the beginning of time. The act of dancing, which throughout history has always mirrored societal changes, has served multiple purposes: to propitiate the gods, in rites of passage, in joyous celebrat-
tion, to express emotion, and to entertain and bedazzle an audience. As civilizations danced, their movements were recorded—at first, with simple line drawings rendered on cave walls; later, Biblical writings described the dances of the time. Realistic three-dimensional sculpture and fully modeled paintings, which augmented written documentation, followed. Today, to support and illustrate the written history of dance, film and videos give accurate moving images of the ongoing evolution of dance.

Primitive men danced—and in some cultures women—around the fire to celebrate and prepare themselves for war. In Europe, Medieval dancers danced outdoors, moving in lines; their soft, flat shoes trod lightly over the grass. During the Renaissance, the nobility performed indoors, where their dances became formal, courtly events—the forerunners of professional ballet; however, peasants kept their robust dances out in the fields, and their dances eventually evolved into current social/ballroom dances. When dance’s pre-eminence moved to the United States, two dance genres were born: tap and jazz. These two forms of dance, as had the European-born dances before, reflected the changes of society. The early twentieth century gave rise to a new frenzied, sexual freedom that was mirrored in the fast, syncopated rhythms and frenzied dances. This trend continued into the mid eighties, when social dances became a no-contact affair, but by the end of the eighties close-couple dancing returned.
The beginning of the nineties brings us full circle. In the Persian Gulf, contemporary men and women dance to celebrate, express their emotions, and in a way as primitive people had done thousands of years before, prepare themselves for war. The dance they do to a Rock 'n' Roll beat is the "Gas Mask," in which the movements of putting on a gas mask are emulated. Dance styles change; men's and women's notion of expressing themselves with movement does not. Dance continues to mirror historical events and changes.


**VIDEO RECORDINGS**


*Oklahoma!* 140 min. CBS Fox Video, 1965.


