

D. C. Copeland's

JITTERBUG!

Music Composition Student Questionnaire

Creating/Explore

(A)

Process component: Imagine.

Anchor Standard: Generate musical ideas for various purposes and contexts.

Enduring Understanding: The creative ideas, concepts, and feelings that influence musicians' work emerge from a variety of sources.

Essential question: How do musicians generate creative ideas?

Specific *Jitterbug!* questions:

» Where do the songwriters **Harold Arlen** and **Ted Koehler** of the Cotton Club's 1931 revue *Rhyth-mania* get their ideas?

» Where do **Cab Calloway** and **Chick Webb** get their ideas?

» How are these musical ideas the same? Different?

» What inspires these musical ideas? Are those same influences the same today? Would it be impossible for swing music to make a comeback in a hip hop world?

» How important is the role of music in inspiring dance steps?

» Are dance steps a product of the times, i.e., are they limited by the style of music? For example, can hip hop be used in swing music?

» Some people believe that the role of the artist should be to confront and challenge our perceptions of what is considered art/dance. If trained or untrained musicians, i.e., teens experimenting with musical *devices* at home or in the clubs or on the streets come up with new styles of music that push the limits of what has been seen, are they not “artists” too?

» Is there really nothing new under the sun, i.e., are ideas (music styles) just recycled over time?

»What roll does technology play in music?

Prompt: Click this [link](#) to discover one of Thomas Edison's first movies showcasing what looks like break dancing in 1894. The title “Pickaninnies” is reflective of the more overt racist sensibilities of the times which should encourage further discussion among students. Can you layer *any* style of music under the video to make it work seamlessly?

Prompt: Click this [link](#) to discover archival footage of Russian soldiers dancing to Run DMC's *It's Like That* in an early B-boy challenge.)

» How far can music be pushed before it becomes repetitive? In *Jitterbug!* the next big thing at that time was the introduction of “air steps” to the Lindy, i.e., Jujitsu dance moves that (for the most part) lifts the woman off the floor and throws her around, over, and under her partner's body. What do you think inspired that kind of dancing? Was it the music? Had it ever been seen before that time?

A-1

a. Describe how sounds and short musical ideas are used to represent personal experiences, moods, visual images, and/or storylines in *Jitterbug!*

A-2

a. Describe and demonstrate how sounds and musical ideas are used to represent sonic events, memories, visual images, concepts, texts, or storylines from *Jitterbug!*

A-3

a. Describe and demonstrate multiple ways in which sounds and musical ideas are used to represent extended sonic experiences or abstract ideas in *Jitterbug!*

Creating/Planning and Making

(B)

Process Component: Planning and making.

Anchor Standard: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Enduring Understanding: Musicians’ creative choices are influenced by their expertise, context, and expressive intent.

Essential Question: How do musicians make creative decisions?

B-1

- a. Assemble and organize sounds or short musical ideas to create initial expressions of selected experiences, moods, images, or storylines for an alternate *Jitterbug!* “soundtrack.”
 - b. Identify and describe the development of sounds or short musical ideas in drafts of music within simple forms (such as one-part, cyclical, or binary) reflective of *Jitterbug!*
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B-2

- a. Assemble and organize multiple sounds or musical ideas to create initial expressive statements of selected sonic events, memories, images, concepts, texts, or storylines for an alternate *Jitterbug!* “soundtrack.”
 - b. Describe and explain the development of sounds and musical ideas in drafts of music within a variety of simple or moderately complex forms (such as binary, rondo, or ternary) for an alternate *Jitterbug!* “soundtrack.”
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B-3

- a. Assemble and organize multiple sounds or extended musical ideas to create initial expressive statements of selected extended sonic experiences or abstract ideas found in *Jitterbug!*
- b. Analyze and demonstrate the development of sounds and extended musical ideas in drafts of music within a variety of moderately complex or complex forms found in *Jitterbug!*

Prompt: Although the Cotton Club entertainment was totally African American, it was a segregated business catering only to whites. Use for inspiration the 1935 short [*Cab Calloway's Jitterbug Party*](#) to construct an artistic statement about segregation. In the film segregation is taken as a matter of fact and a lie (one of the pillars racism is based on). When the inimitable Cab finishes singing *'Long About Midnight*, a song about Harlemites getting rowdy after dark to forget their troubles during

the day, he walks over to a table of well-dressed African Americans and invites them to a *Jitter Bug* party. Unless those folks (who appear to be hepcats but have never heard of a Jitter Bug party) were sitting in the kitchen, it never could have happened. Artistic license aside, the next shot shows the group leaving the club on their trek through Harlem to the party, passing such legendary long gone landmarks like the Lafayette Theatre (and stereotypes of black men shooting craps in an alley). At the party you won't see any Jitterbug dancing but you will learn the word's origin when Cab sings *Jitter Bug*: Jitter Bug at that time had not been associated with the dance (that would come a few years later). In the film Jitter Bug is referring to an alcoholic suffering the tremors and doesn't paint that in a negative light. It is in fact something to aspire to to forget your troubles. Cab co-wrote the 1934 song and you can read its lyrics [here](#) (scroll down until you see the title). Use this information to develop your music to fit the era or to write new music that is more *truthful*, that is influenced from today's perspective.

Creating/Evaluate and Refine

(C)

Process Component: Evaluate and refine.

Anchor Standard: Refine and complete artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: Musicians evaluate and refine their work through openness to new ideas, persistence, and the application of appropriate criteria.

Essential Question: How do musicians improve the quality of their creative work?

C-1

a. Identify, describe, and apply teacher-provided criteria to assess and refine the technical and expressive aspects of evolving drafts leading to final versions of an alternate *Jitterbug!* “soundtrack.”

C-2

a. Identify, describe, and apply selected teacher-provided or personally-developed criteria to assess and refine the technical and expressive aspects of evolving drafts leading to final versions or an alternate *Jitterbug!* “soundtrack.”

C-3

a. Research, identify, explain, and apply personally-developed criteria to assess and refine the technical and expressive aspects of evolving drafts leading to final versions of an alternate *Jitterbug!* “soundtrack.”

Creating/Present

(D)

Process Component: Present.

Anchor Standard: Share creative musical work that conveys intent, demonstrates craftsmanship, and exhibits originality.

Enduring Understanding: Musicians' presentation of creative work is the culmination of a process of creation and communication.

Essential Question: When is creative work ready to share?

D-1

a. Share *Jitterbug!* music through the use of notation, performance, or technology, and demonstrate how the elements of music have been employed to realize expressive intent.

D-2

a. Share *Jitterbug!* music through the use of notation, solo or group performance, or technology, and demonstrate and describe how the elements of music and compositional techniques have been employed to realize the expressive intent in *Jitterbug!*

D-3

a. Share *Jitterbug!* music through the use of notation, solo or group performance, or technology, and demonstrate and explain how the elements of music, compositional techniques and processes have been employed to realize the expressive intent in *Jitterbug!*

Performing/Select
(E)

Process Component: Select varied musical works to present based on interest, knowledge, technical skill, and context.

Anchor Standard: Select, analyze and interpret artistic work for presentation.

Enduring Understanding: Performers' interest in and knowledge of musical work(s), understanding of their own technical skill, and the context for a performance influence the selection of repertoire.

Essential Question: How do performers select repertoire?

E-1

a. Identify and select specific excerpts, passages, or sections in the *Jitterbug!* music that express a personal experience, mood, visual image, or storyline in simple forms (such as one-part, cyclical, binary).

E-2

a. Identify and select specific passages, sections, or movements in the *Jitterbug!* music that express personal experiences and interests, moods, visual images, concepts, texts, or storylines in simple forms (such as binary, ternary, rondo) or moderately complex forms.

E-3

a. Identify and select specific sections, movements, or entire works found in *Jitterbug!* that express personal experiences and interests, moods, visual images, concepts, texts, or storylines in moderately complex or complex forms.

Performing/Analyze

(F)

Process Component: Analyze

Anchor Standard: Analyze the structure and context of varied musical works and their implications for performance.

Enduring Understanding: Analyzing creators' context and how they manipulate elements of music provides insight into their intent and informs performance.

Essential Question: How does understanding the structure and context of musical works inform performance?

F-1

a. Analyze how the elements of music (including form) of selected works in *Jitterbug!* relate to style and mood, and explain the implications for rehearsal or performance.

F-2

a. Analyze how the elements of music (including form) of selected works in *Jitterbug!* relate to the style, function, and context, and explain the implications for rehearsal and performance.

F-3

a. Analyze how the elements of music (including form), and compositional techniques of selected works in *Jitterbug!* relate to the style, function, and context, and explain and support the analysis and its implications for rehearsal and performance.

Performing/Rehearse, Evaluate, Refine

(G)

Process Component: Evaluate and refine personal and ensemble performances, individually or in collaboration with others.

Anchor Standard: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

Enduring Understanding: To express their musical ideas, musicians analyze, evaluate, and refine their performance over time through openness to new ideas, persistence, and the application of appropriate criteria.

Essential Question: How do musicians improve the quality of their performance?

G-1

- a. Create rehearsal plans for *Jitterbug!* works, identifying repetition and variation within the form.
- b. Using established criteria and feedback, identify the way(s) in which performances convey the elements of music, style, and mood in *Jitterbug!*
- c. Identify and implement strategies for improving the technical and expressive aspects of multiple works in *Jitterbug!*

G-2

- a. Create rehearsal plans for works in *Jitterbug!*, identifying the form, repetition and variation within the form, and the style and historical or cultural context of the work.
- b. Using established criteria and feedback, identify the ways in which performances convey the formal design, style, and historical/cultural context of the works in *Jitterbug!*
- c. Identify and implement strategies for improving the technical and expressive aspects of varied works in *Jitterbug!*

G-3

- a. Create rehearsal plans for *Jitterbug!* works, identifying the form, repetition and variation within the form, compositional techniques, and the style and historical or cultural context of the work.
- b. Using established criteria and feedback, identify the ways in which performances use compositional techniques and convey the formal design, style, and historical/cultural context of the works in *Jitterbug!*
- c. Identify, compare, and implement strategies for improving the technical and expressive aspects of multiple contrasting works in *Jitterbug!*

Performing/Present and Perform

(H)

Process Component: Present and Perform expressively, with appropriate interpretation and technical accuracy, and in a manner appropriate to the audience and context.

Anchor Standard: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: Musicians judge performance based on criteria that vary across time, place, and cultures. The context and how a work is presented influence the audience response.

Essential Question: When is a performance judged ready to present? How do context and the manner in which musical work is presented influence audience response?

H-1

- a. Share live or recorded performances of works (both personal and the music from *Jitterbug!*), and explain how the elements of music are used to convey intent.
- b. Identify how *Jitterbug!* compositions are appropriate for an audience or context, and how this will shape future compositions for alternate or “new” music.

H-2

- a. Share live or recorded performances of works (both personal and from *Jitterbug!*), and explain how the elements of music and compositional techniques are used to convey intent.
- b. Knowing that some songs the playwright had chosen for *Jitterbug!* were not allowed for use by the estate of at least one songwriter/s because they would be deemed inappropriate for today's audience (depiction of race and drug use), explain how the *Jitterbug!* compositions that made the cut are appropriate for both audience and context, and how this will shape future compositions. Do you think the excluded “button pushing” songs affected the dancical's final draft? Aside from the lost of some great music, the playwright insists that they did not. What do you think?

H-3

- a. Share live or recorded performances of works (both personal and from *Jitterbug!*), and explain and/or demonstrate understanding of how the expressive intent of the music is conveyed.
- b. Knowing that some songs the playwright had chosen for *Jitterbug!* were not allowed for use by the estate of at least one songwriter/s because they would be deemed inappropriate for today's audience (depiction of race and drug use), explain how the *Jitterbug!* compositions that made the cut are appropriate for both audience and context, and how this will shape future compositions. Do you think the excluded “button pushing” songs affected the dancical's final draft? Aside from the lost of some great music, the playwright insists that they did not. What do you think?

Responding/Select

(1)

Process Component: Select music appropriate for a specific purpose or context.

Anchor Standard: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: Individuals' selection of musical works is influenced by their interests, experiences, understandings, and purposes.

Essential Question: How do individuals choose music to experience?

1-1

a. Apply teacher-provided criteria to select music that expresses a personal experience, mood, visual image, or storyline in simple forms (such as one-part, cyclical, binary), and describe the choices as models for composition.

1-2

a. Apply teacher-provided or personally-developed criteria to select music that expresses personal experiences and interests, moods, visual images, concepts, texts, or storylines in simple or moderately complex forms, and describe and defend the choices as models for composition.

1-3

a. Apply researched or personally-developed criteria to select music that expresses personal experiences and interests, visual images, concepts, texts, or storylines in moderately complex or complex forms, and describe and justify the choice as models for composition.

Responding/Analyze & Interpret
(J)

Process Component: Analyze how the structure and context of varied musical works inform the response. Support interpretations of musical works that reflect creators’/performers’ expressive intent.

Anchor Standard: Perceive and analyze artistic work. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: Response to music is informed by analyzing context (social, cultural, and historical) and how creators and performers manipulate the elements of music. Through their use of elements and structures of music, creators and performers provide clues to their expressive intent.

Essential Question: How does understanding the structure and context of music inform a response? How do we discern musical creators’ and performers’ expressive intent?

J-1

a. Develop and explain interpretations of varied works found in *Jitterbug!*, demonstrating an understanding of the composers’ intent by citing technical and expressive aspects as well as the style/genre of each work.

J-2

a. Develop and support interpretations of varied works found in *Jitterbug!*, demonstrating an understanding of the composers’ intent by citing the use of elements of music (including form), compositional techniques, and the style/genre and context of each work.

J-3

a. Develop, justify and defend interpretations of varied works found in *Jitterbug!*, demonstrating an understanding of the composers’ intent by citing the use of elements of music (including form), compositional techniques, and the style/genre and context of each work.

Responding/Evaluate

(K)

Process Component: Support evaluations of musical works and performances based on analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.

Anchor Standard: Evaluate. Support evaluations of musical works and performances based on analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.

Enduring Understanding: The personal evaluation of musical works and performances is informed by analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.

Essential Question: How do we judge the quality of musical work(s) and performance(s)?

K-1

- a. Describe the effectiveness of the technical and expressive aspects of the *Jitterbug!* music and performances, demonstrating understanding of fundamentals of music theory.
 - b. Describe the way(s) in which critiquing others' work and receiving feedback from others can be applied in the personal creative process.
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K-2

- a. Explain the effectiveness of the technical and expressive aspects of selected music and performances in *Jitterbug!*, demonstrating understanding of music theory as well as compositional techniques and procedures.
 - b. Describe ways in which critiquing others' work and receiving feedback from others have been specifically applied in the personal creative process.
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K-3

- a. Evaluate the effectiveness of the technical and expressive aspects of selected music and performances in *Jitterbug!*, demonstrating understanding of theoretical concepts and complex compositional techniques and procedures.
- b. Describe and evaluate ways in which critiquing others' work and receiving feedback from others have been specifically applied in the personal creative process.

Connecting/Synthesize (#10)

(1)

Process Component: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music.

Anchor Standard: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Enduring Understanding: Musicians connect their personal interests, experiences, ideas, and knowledge to creating, performing, and responding.

Essential Question: How do musicians make meaningful connections to creating, performing, and responding?

L-1

- a. Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.
 - b. Using the above criteria, apply them to the songwriters Harold Arlen and Ted Koehler.
 - c. Using the above criteria, apply them to songwriter/performers to one of the following: A) Cab Calloway, B) Memphis Minnie, C) Chick Webb.
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L-2

- a. Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.
 - b. Using the above criteria, apply them to songwriter/performers to one of the following: A) Cab Calloway, B) Memphis Minnie, C) Chick Webb.
 - c. Using the above criteria, apply them to songwriter/performers to one of the following: A) Cab Calloway, B) Memphis Minnie, C) Chick Webb.
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L-3

- a. Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.
- b. Using the above criteria, apply them to songwriter/performers to one of the following: A) Cab Calloway, B) Memphis Minnie, C) Chick Webb.
- c. Using the above criteria, apply them to songwriter/performer Duke Ellington.

Connecting/Relate (#11)**(M)**

Process Component: Relate musical ideas and works to varied contexts and daily life to deepen understanding.

Anchor Standard: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

Enduring Understanding: Understanding connections to varied contexts and daily life enhances musicians' creating, performing, and responding.

Essential Question: How do the other arts, other disciplines, contexts and daily life inform creating, performing, and responding to music?

M-1-2-3

a. Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

Resources

Video

Dance Styles in *Jitterbug!*:

B **Black Bottom:** [1927 newsreel](#) (music added). Despite its overt racism which was common for the times, it includes instructions on how to do the dance (on insert cards) and shows how to do the dance with part of them in slow motion. Single dancer.

Black Bottom: [1927 silent newsreel](#). French couple dancing. Barely resembles the dance seen in the video above. Does show the connection to the Charleston.

Black Bottom: [1927 silent newsreel](#). Claims to show the “original” dance.

Black Bottom: [1928 silent newsreel](#). Shows close-up of steps. Couple.

Black Bottom: [1929 film *Hallelujah*](#) Contains probably the most authentic Black Bottom. One of the earliest “talkies” made, this film was directed by one of the top directors of that day, King Vidor (who was white) for MGM. You can learn more about the film [here](#).

Black Bottom: [Roxie Hart](#) (1942) Ginger Rogers performs the dance. Re-make of the 1927 silent movie *Chicago* which the latter 1975 Broadway hit *Chicago* and the 2002 Oscar-winning film are based on.

Black Bottom: [1956 film *The Best Things in Life are Free*](#). This Broadwaysized version features Sheree North who nearly 40-years later would play Cosmo Kramer's mom “Babs” on *Seinfeld*.

Black Bottom: [Lawrence Welk Show](#).

C **Charleston:** [1920's newsreel](#). Shows how to do the dance with music.

Charleston: [Vintage B&W TV special](#) showing two of the great Savoy dancers demonstrating the Charleston, Al Minns and Leon James. Both were members of the Jolly Fellows and danced exclusively in Cat's Corner at the Savoy. Both also danced in Whitey's Lindy Hoppers. Here they are doing a [potpourri of dance steps](#) (Shimmy, Charleston, Black Bottom, Snake Hips, and the Lindy Hop/Jitterbug). You can also watch both men in their prime in this [amazing compilation reel](#) of Lindy/Jitterbug dancers. Watch and be amazed and inspired.

J **Jitterbug:** [A Day at the Races](#) (1937). This Marx Brothers movie features a segment with Whitey's Lindy Hoppers called “All God's Children Got Rhythm.” Leon James does his thing at 1:50. The whole segment is wonderfully inspiring-- especially watching the heavyset guy do a slow split.

Jitterbug: [I Am The Law](#) (1938) Inspiring if for no other reason than to watch Edward G Robinson attempt The Dance, aka the Jitterbug.

Jitterbug: [*It's in the Stars*](#) (1938) More inspired moves. Lots of Pecking going on.

Jitterbug: [*Radio City Revels*](#) (1938) Featuring Whitey's Lindy Hoppers.

Jitterbug: [*Start Cheering*](#) (1938) Line and circle Jitterbug dancing plus the band leader calls out steps used in *Jitterbug!* which are dutifully done. Also includes some inspired tap dancing.

Jitterbug: [*Blondie Meets The Boss*](#) (1939). Based on the comic strip *Blondie*. Some wild stuff going on here with Dagwood wearing a wire for his “air steps.”

Jitterbug: [*Keep Punchin' Jitterbug Contest*](#). 1939 B&W movie with some worthy moves.

Jitterbug: [*Naughty But Nice*](#) (1939) It literally takes a “hot foot” to get star Dick Powell up and dancing. In the film Powell's character calls the Jitterbug “absolutely barbaric” but is reminded that it can't be all bad since “10 million kids love it.”

Jitterbug: [*Wizard of Oz*](#) (1939) This dance scene was cut from the film. Shot by a stage hand behind the scenes (you can see guys hiding inside the rubber trees). Worth a watch just to see Ray Bolger's take on a scarecrow dancing the Jitterbug. The Tin Man is Buddy Ebsen before he had to drop out because of his allergy to the tin colored make-up (replaced by Jack Haley). Both actors were song and dance men.

Jitterbug: [*Hellzapoppin*](#) (1941) featuring Whitey's Lindy Hoppers. Names of the dancers can be found on the “amazing compilation reel” above.

Jitterbug: [*Hot Chocolate*](#) (Cottontail) 1941. Featuring Whitey's Lindy Hoppers and the Duke Ellington Orchestra. Wild and inspiring stuff here!

Jitterbug: [*Jitterbug Jamboree*](#) (1941) Newsreel snippet of one of the legendary Harvest Moon Balls in NYC's Madison Square Garden only months before the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor. This is what the 1931 *Jitterbug!* dance contest will look like in 10-years. In the dancical, only Billy and Tharbis are dancing like this.

Jitterbug: [*Harvest Moon Ball*](#) (1940's) Great stuff here! Get inspired and do it!

Jitterbug: [*Ringside Maisie*](#) (1941) Features Ann Sothern as a bored Jitterbugger dancing in a full-length gown. Props to her partner Roy Lester who does his best to get her into the groove.

Jitterbug: [*The Outline of Jitterbug History*](#) (1942). A comic short featuring Whitey's Lindy Hoppers. Worth a watch to see 18th century costumed and bewigged dancers doing the Jitterbug.

Jitterbug: [*Private Buckaroo*](#) (1942) Features the “Jivin' Jack and Jills,” a Universal Studios assembled group of the best teenage dancers in the country. Donald O'Connor was one of them. High energy, synchronized multi-couple Jitterbugging, extreme spinning, and acrobatics. Worth a watch!

Jitterbug: [*Rings on her Fingers*](#) (1942) Includes the great Henry Fonda cutting the rug.

Jitterbug: [The Canterville Ghost](#) (1944) Showcases some pretty cool moves like Pecking and the Suzy Q.

Jitterbug: [The Fighting Seabees](#) (1944). John Wayne dances the Jitterbug. Worth a watch especially for that one instruction from his dancing partner: “Pull!”

Jitterbug: [Groovy Movie](#) (1944). A great if not bizarre instructional video that surprisingly connects Jitterbug steps to other dancing styles from history. Includes moves mentioned in *Jitterbug!* with props to Shorty George.

Jitterbug: [Twice Blessed](#) (1945). Great dance moves and hep-cat jive, too!

Jitterbug: [Till the End of Time](#) (1946) Laid back and slow enough anyone can watch and learn the steps (including a very young Robert Mitchum who wouldn't get up and try).

Jitterbug: [Swing Kids](#) (1993) Who knew German kids were Jitterbugging in Nazi Germany? Choreographed by Otis Sallid and Ryan Francois.

L Lindy: Please note, in *Jitterbug!* the Lindy is for those who can't do the Jitterbug or win dance contests. The following examples are for learning the steps for the “rest of them” who are taking up space on the dancical's dance floors.

Dance champion Robert Royston has assembled a [one-stop-place](#) on the Net for anyone wanting to learn how to swing dance including learning how to do the period Lindy Hop found in *Jitterbug!* It's really quite remarkable and worth the watch. Each video lesson (listed on the right side of the screen) automatically segues from one to the other (unless, of course, you want to pause and replay a video enough times to learn the steps). Here he also singles out the “Shorty George” named after George “Shorty” Snowden and shows you how to do it.

[Here's](#) a link to watching and learning most of the steps associated with the Lindy as demonstrated by Al Minns and Leon James, members of the Jolly Fellow, who actually danced and invented some of the steps at the Savoy. These early 60's clips show the men some 30+ years after their reign at the Savoy. Pretty cool.

S Slow Drag: Blues dance instructor Joe DeMers has assembled an amazing [5-part series](#) on learning how to do a mean slow drag. Props for including archival footage of people actually doing the dance with lifts and spins. Muy inspiring.

T Tap Dancing: Billy Rhythm and Tharbis Jefferson are accomplished dancers who know many styles. When they start to reinvent the winning Jitterbug number at the Savoy dance contest, they unleash everything they know on the dance floor including tap dancing, something that was rarely seen at that time outside of either the black or white vaudeville theatre. But, unlike the “old school” hooper style of [Bojangles](#) which basically was tap dancing in place, with little or no movement across the floor, they were “tapping” the style of the legendary Eddie Rector who, at that time, was tapping while dancing gracefully across the stage, i.e., in the style of [Fred Astaire](#)*. Of course, what the playwright is looking for from Billy and Tharbis is something on the level of the [Nicholas Brothers](#) dance from their

1943 film *Stormy Weather* which is based on the life of Bill “Bojangles” Robinson. It stars Mr. Robinson, Lena Horne, and Cab Calloway. A full viewing is recommended on many levels including getting a sense of *Jitterbug!*'s historical setting. *In *Jazz Dance*, Astaire is quoted as seeing himself as a “musical comedy performer' with no rules of dancing that he cannot break, and no limitations on what he may attempt.” A good mantra for any aspiring choreographer or dancer.

Tap Dancing: Here's a [video](#) featuring Sammy Davis, Jr and other legendary tap dancers at the Apollo Theater. Steps galore are on display plus the opening vintage footage of Sammy (dancing with his father and uncle) should inspire anyone.

Tap Dancing: [Here's](#) the closest thing the playwright could find of tap dancers “trading fours” as depicted in the *Jitterbug!* scene between Billy and Bojangles in the Hooper's Club (but with far less space to move around and kissing). It's with Gregory Hines and Sammy Davis, Jr. The actual show down doesn't start until about 7:45 but it is preceded with some great tap dancing by Hines.

Tap Dancing: 1984's Broadway smash *The Tap Dance Kid's* “[Fabulous Feet](#)” number featuring Hinton Battle, 13-year-old Alfonso Ribeiro, major balletic spinning, cringe-inducing splits, and break dancing.

Tap Dancing: Dule Hill and Gus Omundson's tap challenge in an episode from [Psych](#) captures the feel of trading fours in the Hooper's Club but with a rap music groove.

Historic *Jitterbug!* Character References

Harold Arlen: Son of a Jewish Cantor, Arlen was only in his twenties when he and his songwriting partner/lyricist Ted Koehler began writing songs for the mob's Owney Madden who owned the Cotton Club. He later went on to write the music for *The Wizard of Oz* (lyrics by E.Y. “Yip” Harburg) which included, of course, “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.” Here's a [link](#) to a 1954 TV special featuring Arlen playing a piano while stars like Frank Sinatra sing his songs. You can read his online bio [here](#).

Cab Calloway: The coolest cat ever to have lived and another one of America's great gifts to the world. As a band leader no one had ever seen anything like him before-- or since. A true original. [Here](#) is a one-stop-place on YouTube for everything Cab. If you don't have a lot of time, make sure you watch the 1933 clip of him singing his hit [Zaz Zuh Zaz](#). It's a compilation of many of his performances of his hit songs including *Minnie the Moocher* with him appearing in white tails and a white Zoot Suit. You can read his online bio [here](#).

Vincent “Mad Dog” Coll: Born Uinseann Ó Colla, this Irish-American gangster business model of kidnapping rival gangsters came back to bite him in the ass when Owney Madden made him pay the ultimate price for kidnapping his partner at the Cotton Club, George “Big Frenchy” DeMange. Coll died of multiple gunshot wounds in a phone booth at the London Chemists drug store on 8th Avenue and 23rd Street in Manhattan. He was 23-years old at the time of his death. You can read more about him [here](#).

Ella Fitzgerald: As a teenager, she was discovered in an Apollo Theater talent competition. Chick Webb hired the 18-year-old in 1935 to sing for his band. When he died in 1939, she took over managing it. You can read her amazing online bio [here](#).

Owney Madden/Big Frenchy DeMange: Mobster boss and his partner. They owned the Cotton Club. You can read their online bio [here](#).

Bill “Bojangles: Robinson: Considered by many to be the greatest of the early hoofers. [Here's](#) a one-stop-place on YouTube for everything Bojangles. You can read his online bio [here](#).

Stephanie St. Clair/Ellsworth “Bumpy” Johnson: Born in Martinique, the entrepreneurial St. Clair partnered with Ellsworth “Bumpy” Johnson to bring the illegal numbers game to Harlem where she was called Madam St. Clair (the disrespectful “Queenie in the rest of NYC). When white gangster Dutch Schultz decided to “annex” her business, a gang war broke out with over 40 dead in the process. You can read more about Madame and Bumpy [here](#).

Chick Webb: The diminutive drummer and bandleader held reign at the Savoy Ballroom from 1931 until his death in 1939. Because the Savoy loved staging “Battle of the Bands” with any swing band that might be in town, one was set up with the Benny Goodman Orchestra. When word got out, 25,000 people were lined up outside of the Savoy trying to get in while 5,000 were already squeezed inside. As it turned out, “Harlem's House Band” took on the big and powerful Benny Goodman band and put them away. The only video we could find of Chick Webb and his Orchestra is from a 1929 short called [After Seben](#) (skip forward to 11:30) Although it only shows part of his band, the video has some other things going for it. First it stars James Barton, one of the top white vaudevillians who came out of the minstrel shows, i.e., he performed in black face (stay around to see his “eccentric” dance at the end). Secondly, the dancers are all from the Savoy Ballroom-- including George “Shorty” Snowden. Steps include the Charleston, the Cakewalk, and the Breakaway (which Snowden takes credit for inventing). Finally, you gotta admire the clothing style of the first woman dancer-- especially that way cool mini-boot. You can read Webb's online bio [here](#).

Herbert “Whitey” White: Head bouncer at the Savoy Ballroom, founder of the Jolly Fellows, a Harlem gang of the 1920's and 30's, and various Lindy dance troupes such as Whitey's Lindy Hoppers. You can read his online bio [here](#).

Historic Jitterbug! Scene References

Cotton Club: The legendary Cotton Club was owned and operated by gang boss Owney Madden as a way of selling his “Number One” beer that he brewed in Canada and snuck and bribed past US authorities to sell in his club during Prohibition. It was once known as “Club Deluxe” and owned by the first African American World Champion Heavyweight prize fighter Jack Johnson. Madden persuaded the champ to sell it to him by making him “an offer he couldn't refuse.” Located at 142nd Street and Lenox Avenue, it lasted from 1923 to 1935. Following the 1935 Harlem race riot it shut down in 1936 and reopened later in that year at Broadway and 48th (where Broadway and 7th Avenue meet in Manhattan). [Here's](#) a rare look of an actual Cotton Club show when the dashing young genius Duke Ellington was working there before going to Hollywood and Cab Calloway took over. [Here's](#) a 1934 YouTube link to Cab performing in what may or not be the Cotton Club-- it could have been shot in Hollywood but it has the most accurate, intimate feel for the Club. His actual performance begins around 3:24 but the prelude is also worth a watch to see his showmanship).

Lafayette Theater: To learn more about the legendary theatre, please click [here](#) and scroll down the page until you get to the Lafayette items which includes rare footage of 20-year-old Orson Welles 1936 staging of *MacBeth* with the first all African American cast.

Savoy Ballroom: When it opened in 1926 on Lenox Avenue between 140th and 141st streets in Harlem, it was the largest ballroom in the world, big enough to accommodate 5,000 people at a time. It had two band stands and its block-long wood dance floor was spring loaded (and replaced every three years). Owned by Moe Gale, a Jewish man, and managed by Charles Buchanan, a black man, it was instrumental for [breaking down racial barriers](#) where people of all colors and economic strata could dance to swing music-- despite white police trying to stop white patrons from entering in the Savoy's early days. George "Shorty" Snowden received a gilt lifetime pass for helping put it on the map when he won the Savoy's first dance marathon. After a 33-year run, the Savoy is only a legendary distant memory. [Here's](#) an interesting look at the Savoy with interviews, including one with the son of Moe Gale.

Music Resources

Lesson plans

A Jazzy Neighborhood Journey: Wynton Marsalis, through the New York Philharmonic, creates a study unit on Duke Ellington's *A Tone Parallel to Harlem* for the classroom. Includes a short bio on Ellington, the composition's origins, the composer's thought process on creating the symphonic piece-- a journey through Harlem that samples the city's unique culture through a mashup of his jazz band playing with a full symphonic orchestra-- and his use of a short musical theme called a *motive* which "he describes as 'pronouncing the word *Harlem*'. This is the first sound you hear played by a muted trumpet." The lesson then encourages students to create motives for their own neighborhoods. You can find it [here](#) (scroll down to Unit 4).

Blanche and Cab Calloway: The American Swing Band and Today's Music. Click [here](#) to find extensive well-developed high school vocal and general music class lesson plans produced by the Maryland State Department of Education in partnership with the [Reginald F Lewis Maryland Museum of African American History and Culture](#).

Chick Webb: Jazz Innovator. Click [here](#) to view another wonderful lesson plan from the Maryland/Lewis Museum collaboration. Targets elementary and middle school (music) students but is easily tweakable for upper grades.

Washington and Baltimore Jazz Greats: James Reese Europe, Duke Ellington and Billie Holiday. Click [here](#) to find another great lesson plan from the Maryland/Lewis Museum collaboration. Targets high school general music and jazz history classes. Full of linked resources and teaching ideas.

Jazz Music Video Library

The Jazz Academy Video Library: Click [here](#) to go to Jazz at Lincoln Center's one-stop source of its educational videos.

Symphony in Black. Click [here](#) to see this 1935 short film (9:36) starring Duke Ellington. It shows him composing, playing, and conducting his orchestra. It also includes Billie Holiday's film debut and Earl "Snake Hips" Tucker doing his signature dance in a more restrained, family-friendly fashion.

Duke Ellington and the Classic Connection

Stanley Slome "attempts to unravel the tangle of contradictions, factual errors and unanswered questions which mar the historical record... of *A Tone Parallel To Harlem*, i.e., *The Harlem Suite* or just *Harlem*." Fascinating backgrounder that goes into great detail about the lost copy of the sheet music given to President Truman, among other things. You can find it [here](#).

Harlem sheet music: You can view all 71-pages for the 18-minute piece [here](#).

Jitterbug! Bibliography

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[Jazz Dance: The Story of American Vernacular Dance](#) (1994). 508 pages. Marshall and Jean Stearns. DeCapo Press. ISBN 978-0306805530

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[Nigger Heaven](#) (1999). 336 pages. Carl Van Vechten. University of Illinois Press. Originally released in 1926 during the Harlem Renaissance. ISBN 978-0252068607

[Of Minnie the Moocher and Me](#) (1976) 282 pages. Cab Calloway. Thomas Y. Crowell Company. Autobiography. ISBN 978-0690010329

[Precious Lord: The Great Gospel Songs of Thomas A. Dorsey](#) (1994). MP3. Sony

[Waltzing in the Dark: African American Vaudeville and Race Politics in the Swing Era](#) (2002). 288 pages. Brenda Dixon Gottschild. Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN: 978-0312294434

[When Harlem Was in Vogue](#) (1997) 448 pages. David Levering Lewis. Penguin Books. ISBN 978-0140263343

Labanotation Glossary

BASIC DIRECTIONS FOR STEPS AND LEG GESTURES

LEG GESTURES

LEFT KNEE IS RAISED IN FRONT HIP LEVEL

R ANKLE LOWER LEGS RAISED DIAGONALLY R. BACKWARD

HIPS

KNEES

ANKLES

FEET

ARMS

SHOULDER

ELBOW

WRIST

HAND

MIDDLE FINGER

THUMBS

ARMS

SHOULDER

ELBOW

WRIST

HAND

MIDDLE FINGER

THUMBS

AUXILIARY SIGNS

▲ = ACCENT AS IN STAMPING, CLAPPING

△ = ACCENT WITHOUT SOUND

× = SMALL OR BENT

∩ = LARGE OR STRETCHED

※ = VERY SMALL

○ = HOLD. NO MOVEMENT

◇ = HOLD RELATIONSHIP TO SPACE

⊗ = HOLD THE SPOT

⌋ = STAPLE - FOOT REMAINS WHERE IT IS

> = SHIFT OF WEIGHT

∨ = SUCCESSION OF MOVEMENT THROUGH ALL PARTS OF A LIMB

BODY SIGNS

□ = FACE

▢ = HEAD

▣ = INCLINE

▤ = CHEST FORWARD

▥ = CHEST

▦ = ARCH

▧ = BACKWARD

▨ = WHOLE TORSO INCLINES FORWARD

▩ = PARALLEL TO FLOOR

▪ = LEANS FORWARD

▫ = ANKLE

▬ = WAIST

▭ = FRONT OF

▮ = SIDE OF

▯ = FRONT OF

▰ = BACK OF

▱ = OVER R. HIP JOINT

▲ = TILT UPPER CHEST

△ = CHEST SIDE

▴ = PELVIC

▵ = GIRDLE

▶ = LEFT OF

▷ = RIGHT OF

▸ = HIPS PRESSED UNDER

▹ = RAISED IN BACK

► = A LITTLE

▻ = ROTATE RIGHT

▼ = ROTATE LEFT

▽ = ROTATE

▾ = ROTATE

▿ = ROTATE

ROTATIONS OF THE LEGS USED IN STEPS AND LEG GESTURES

LEGS ROTATE IN OPPOSITION

BOTH LEGS ROTATE TO SAME SIDE

ROTATE ON ONE LEG

ROTATE LEGS ALTERNATELY

INCLINING

TORSO

CHEST

SHIFT LOWER BODY (WAIST TO ANKLE).

PELVIC MOVEMENTS

LEFT AND RIGHT LATERAL SHIFTS

FORWARD AND BACK ROTATION

SHUFFLING AND GLIDING

SHUFFLING, LEG GESTURES (NO WEIGHT ON SHUFFLING FOOT).

GLIDING STEPS

EMBELLISHMENTS IN HANDS, HEAD, SHOULDERS

HEAD MOODS SLIGHTLY

HEAD ROTATES

SHOULDER RAISED

HAND TOUCHES FRONT OF PELVIC AREA

FINGERS SNAP

HANDS CLAP

HAND DOES FLICKING MOTION.

JUMPING, HOPPING, KICKING, STAMPING

JUMPS

HOPS

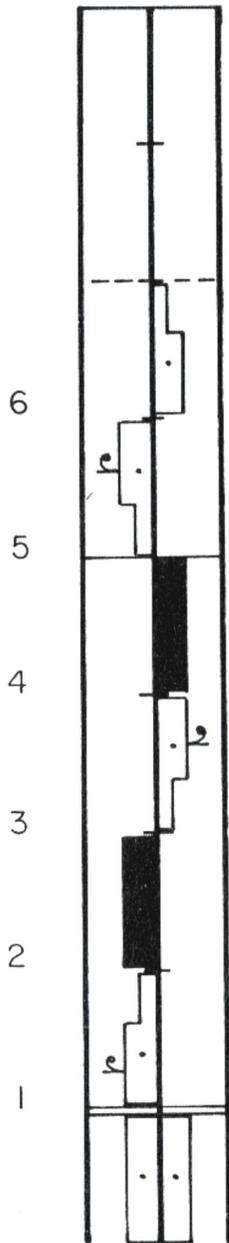
STAMPS

KICKS

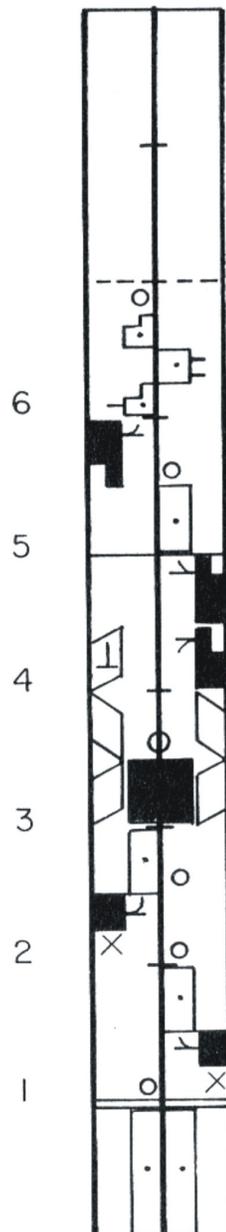
HIGH KICK

D.C. Copeland's
JITTERBUG!
 It's not a musical. It's a dancical!

Labanotation for Lindy & Jitterbug



LINDY HOP



JITTERBUG

