D. C. Copeland's



History and Social Studies Student Questionnaire

Key Ideas and Details(A)

- 1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- 2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- 3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

A-1

- a. Using the annotated notes at the back of the play and the bibliography at the back of this questionnaire, and information found at www.jittrbug.net as a starting point to finding your answer/s, cite specific textual historical evidence that supports the validity of the playwright's primary and secondary sources re the "Get Happy" scene.
- b. He is on record for saying a picture of unemployed black men standing in line behind a rope in New York City during the Great Depression inspired that scene. What was he trying to convey?

A-2

- a. Using the annotated notes at the back of the play and the bibliography at the back of this questionnaire as a starting point to finding your answer/s, determine the central ideas or information in *Jitterbug!* and back that up by identifying the primary or secondary sources-- including the actual text-- that provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among those key details and ideas.
- b. Examine the passage of the <u>Eighteenth Amendment</u> to the Constitution and the Volstead Act (Prohibition). How do they fit in with the play's storyline? Is the play faithful to the facts, i.e., the aftermath of the passage of the legislation?

A-3

a. Using the annotated notes at the back of the play, the bibliography at the back of this questionnaire, and information found at www.jittrbug.net as a starting point to finding your answer/s, evaluate the accuracy of the scene that ends Act 1. Four different storylines end at the same time. Evaluate various

explanations for the playwright's construction of that scene supporting your answers with textual evidence of the key ideas and details. Knowing the playwright used "poetic license" to make the scene work for his own purposes, show where the text leaves matters uncertain or where the truth has been twisted based on your research.

- b. Describe the Harlem Renaissance and new trends in literature, music, and art, with special attention to the work of writers (e.g., Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen) and how and why these artists, the events of the time, and ideas (political, religious, etc) develop and interact over the course of the play.
- c. Discuss how *Jitterbug!* integrates the rise of mass production techniques, the growth of cities, the impact of new technologies (i.e., the automobile, electricity), and the resulting prosperity and effect on the American landscape into the play.

Craft and Structure

(B)

- 4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- 5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
- 6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

B-1

a. What was the playwright trying to convey with his main character's last name: Rhythm? Use examples from the play to back up your contention.

B-2

a. Analyze in detail how *Jitterbug!* is structured, including how key dialog and scenes contribute to the whole.

B-3

a. Go to www.jittrbug.net to uncover the playwright's reasoning for choosing to write certain scenes the way he did. What motivations were based on historical accuracy? On literary choices sampled from writers and poets of the Harlem Renaissance? Compare that to the works of Langston Hughes or Countee Cullen and their interpretation of the times.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

(C)

- 7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- 8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
- 9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

C-1

a. At the dinner table scene, Billy Rhythm gets into an argument with a fellow tenant re a black person's position on society's totem pole during the Harlem Renaissance. Gather and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats (including text and multimedia) that supports his argument. Include Billie Holiday's 1939 song *Strange Fruit* in your comparative research. Click here to listen to the song with its haunting, bluesy horn opening. Click here to *see* and hear her interpretation of the song 20-years later in her last TV appearance (February 1959) before dying from cirrhosis of the liver five months later (July 17, 1959).

b. Trace the growth and effects of radio, movies, and syndicated newspaper columns (*Ripley's Believe it or Not!* and its spin-off travelogues) and their role in the worldwide diffusion of popular culture. Evaluate their integration into the play, i.e., how were they used?

C-2

a. Evaluate the playwright's dramatic choices based on historical context and the social mores of 1930's America. Were they accurate? What might be it's most glaring inaccuracy?

C-3

a. Poetic license was used by the playwright to fit the facts to the fictional storyline. He integrated information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary in an effort to create a coherent understanding of the ideas and events of that historic period. There are many examples throughout the "dancical." List as many as you can with supporting evidence that may be found (among other places) at www.jittrbug.net, in the annotated notes at the back of the play, and in the bibliography at the end of this questionnaire.

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 <u>here</u>.

Black Bottom: <u>Roxie Hart</u> (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: <u>1956 film</u> *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.

Charleston: 1920's newsreel. Shows how to do the dance with music.

Charleston: <u>Vintage B&W TV special</u> 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 <u>potpourri of dance steps</u> (Shimmy, Charleston, Black Bottom, Snake Hips, and the Lindy Hop/Jitterbug). You can also watch both men in their prime in this <u>amazing compilation reel</u> 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: <u>I Am The Law</u> (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: <u>Keep Punchin' Jitterbug Contest</u>. 1939 B&W movie with some worthy moves.

Jitterbug: <u>Naughty But Nice</u> (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: <u>Wizard of Oz</u> (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: <u>Hellzapoppin</u> (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: <u>Ringside Maisie</u> (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: <u>Private Buckaroo</u> (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: <u>Rings on her Fingers</u> (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: <u>The Fighting Seabees</u> (1944). John Wayne dances the Jitterbug. Worth a watch especially for that one instruction from his dancing partner: "Pull!"

Jitterbug: <u>Groovy Movie</u> (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: <u>Till the End of Time</u> (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 <u>one-stop-place</u> 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.

<u>Here's</u> 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.

- Slow Drag: Blues dance instructor Joe DeMers has assembled an amazing <u>5-part series</u> 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.
- **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" hoofer style of <u>Bojangles</u> 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 <u>Fred Astaire</u>*. Of course, what the playwright is looking for from Billy and Tharbis is something on the level of the <u>Nicholas Brothers</u> 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 <u>video</u> 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 Hoofer'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 <u>Psych</u> captures the feel of trading fours in the Hoofer'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 <u>link</u> to a 1954 TV special featuring Arlen playing a piano while stars like Frank Sinatra sing his songs. You can read his online bio <u>here</u>.

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 <u>here</u>.

Owney Madden/Big Frenchy DeMange: Mobster boss and his partner. They owned the Cotton Club. You can read their online bio <u>here</u>.

Bill "Bojangles: Robinson: Considered by many to be the greatest of the early hoofers. <u>Here's</u> a one-stop-place on YouTube for everything Bojangles. You can read his online bio <u>here</u>.

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 miniboot. 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 142 nd 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 <u>here</u> 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 <u>here</u> 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 <u>Reginald F Lewis Maryland Museum of African American History and Culture</u>.

Chick Webb: Jazz Innovator. Click <u>here</u> 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 <u>here</u> 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 <u>here</u> to go to Jazz at Lincoln Center's one-stop source of its educational videos.

Symphony in Black. Click <u>here</u> 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 <u>here</u>.

Jitterbug! Bibliography

<u>Cab Calloway's Hepster Dictionary</u> (1944). Long out of print, much of it can be found at the Calloway website.

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The Cotton Club (1977). James Haskins. 213 pages. Hippocrene Books. ISBN 978-0781802482

<u>Jazz Dance: The Story of American Vernacular Dance</u> (1994). 508 pages. Marshall and Jean Stearns. DeCapo Press. ISBN 978-0306805530

<u>Jookin': The Rise of Social Dance Formations in African American Culture</u> (1992). 248 pages. Katrina Hazzard-Gordon. Temple University Press. ISBN 978-

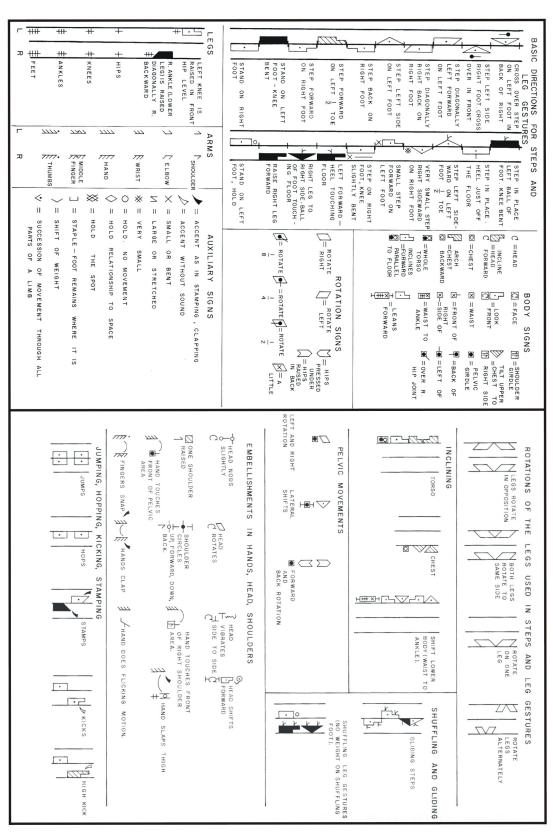
My Soul's High Song (1990). 618 pages. Countee Cullen. Anchor. ISBN 978-0385412957

<u>Nigger Heaven</u> (1999). 336 pages. Carl Van Vechten. University of Illinois Press. Originally released in 1926 during the Harlem Renaissance. ISBN 978-0252068607

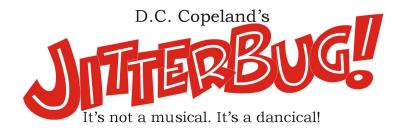
Of Minnie the Moocher and Me (1976) 282 pages. Cab Calloway. Thomas Y. Crowell Company. Autobiography. ISBN 978-0690010329

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



Labanotation for Lindy & Jitterbug

