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Noisy Feet: The Forgotten Click of American Toe-Tap, 1925 — 1935

Sarah Helen Williams

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**NOISY FEET: THE FORGOTTEN CLICK OF
AMERICAN TOE-TAP, 1925 – 1935**

BY

SARAH HELEN WILLIAMS

**BACHELOR OF ARTS, DANCE AND FRENCH
HOPE COLLEGE, MAY 5, 2009**

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS
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Finally, I wish to thank the toe-tappers from the 1920s and 1930s for their contribution to dance history. To every man and woman, child or adult that yearned to be part of the dance world, but was not readily accepted, including every ankle and toe they broke, every trickle of sweat or tear shed, every ridiculous costume they wore, and to every audience member they delighted: this thesis is for you. Your dance was not in vain.

- Sarah Helen Williams, (April 2012)

**NOISY FEET: THE FORGOTTEN CLICK OF
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by

Sarah Helen Williams

B.A., Dance and French, Hope College, 2009

M.A., Theatre and Dance, University of New Mexico, 2012

ABSTRACT

Toe-tap is an extreme form of tap dancing. As related to both American ballet and tap dance history, this style has been widely forgotten. “Noisy Feet: The Forgotten Click of American Toe-Tap, 1925-1935” is the beginning of an effort to include toe-tap in dance history, acknowledging toe-tap’s questionable relationship to ballet. The work investigates the state of American ballet before the arrival of the Ballets Russes and explores innovations of pointe, tap, and toe-tap shoes by theatrical shoe makers. It defines the style of toe-tap and provides choreographic analyses of toe-tap pieces, examines the lives and careers of individual toe-tappers, and discusses the importance of toe-tap as it relates to novelty and economics during this time period. This thesis draws extensively from primary source materials, including historic newspapers, patents from the United States Patent and Trademark Office, and film clips from Hollywood, including newsreels, short films, and full-length features.

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CHAPTER 1 – TOE-TAP: THE WHY

Why Toe-Tap?

Dancers have created music with their feet for centuries. Though some of these percussive noises have resounded from the stomp of the bare foot, many Western forms have developed unique ways of separating the feet from the dance floor. This has been accomplished through the use of clogs, high-heeled ballroom shoes, character shoes, Greek sandals, jazz shoes, boots, and, of course, pointe shoes and tap shoes. In the early twentieth century, when the pointe shoe was combined with the tap shoe for the first time, an entirely new form was created. And thus, toe-tap was born.

The fusing of these two dance forms creates a product unlike many others. But what are the circumstances that that allowed for the invention of toe-tap? Ballet is a European dance style generated by popular dance forms and eventually embraced by royalty. Tap traces its roots back to enslaved Africans and Irish immigrants in the new American nation before being taken up by performers wearing tuxedos and top hats. Ballet is championed for its grace and lofty heights. Tap is advanced through the acceptance of a relationship between the foot and the floor. Sounds from those dancing *sur la pointe des pieds* are wholly frowned upon. Tap is music from the feet. It seems that these are two forms unlikely to ever dance together.

Ballet dancers began dancing *en pointe* in the early nineteenth century. Though the exact date of the first pointe performance is highly disputed, few would disagree that the invention of these contraptions changed ballet forever. Dancing *en pointe* became an integral choreographic element during the Romantic period, ushered in by Marie Taglioni's 1832 performance of *La Sylphide*. It was said of her performance that, "Hers is

a totally new style of dancing, graceful beyond all comparison, wonderful lightness, an absence of all violent effort or at least the appearance of it” (Trucco 20). Critic Théophile Gautier expressed his expectations of Taglioni’s pointe dancing in one writing from 1838, stating, “When she appears on stage, you always see the white mist bathed in transparent muslin, the ethereal and chaste vision, the divine delight which we know so well...” (26).

Early pointe shoes, like those worn by Taglioni, did not include blocked boxes, nor did they have shanks (Chazin-Bennahum 192). Since their first appearances on stage, pointe shoes have continued to develop. Italian shoemaker Nicolini added blocked boxes to his shoes so that they would be next to soundless for his dancers at the Imperial Ballet (Barringer 5). Anna Pavlova was known to have worn pointe shoes with wide bases to aid her in balancing (Fig. 1).

While the pointe shoe then and now allows for dancers to balance their weight on the tips of their toes, it is not the only type of footwear that allows for this action to take place. The platform of a tap shoe is also wide enough to allow for weight displacement. Early forms of tap did not recognize one universal form of tap shoe. As an art form created by and for the common man, the earliest tap shoes could have been any footwear with a hard sole. To the bottom of these shoes, metallic objects like nails, soda caps, and pennies were attached with the intention of creating sounds.

It was not until the early twentieth century that dancers began nailing metal plates under the balls and heels of their feet (Hill 83). With more universal tap shoes in production, the selection of heel width and height became more important as artists strove to create particular sounds. The tap shoe with the higher Cuban heel, as favored by

Eleanor Powell, allowed for heel-dropping rhythm tap (Hill 127). Students sported Mary Janes and oxfords, while professionals favored the split-clog shoes with wood placed under the ball of the foot and the heel (Wayburn 266). Dancers like Ginger Rogers and Ann Miller used higher and higher heels that created a lighter, higher pitched sound; following the lead of its dancers, the tap shoe seemed destined to be elevated to a taller place.

Pointe shoes and tap shoes were still developing in the early twentieth century, and the venues in which they were used aided significantly in this process. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, vaudeville became a virtual breeding ground for variety acts. Comedians, musicians, jugglers, contortionists, whistlers, clowns, billiardists, regurgitators, gun spinners, and many other specialty acts flooded the vaudeville circuits. Of course, many do not believe that ballet belonged in the lowly vaudeville; as Adrienne McLean complains in *Dying Swans and Madmen*, “The fact that ballet was performed in burlesque and vaudeville and musical comedy theaters was merely a sign that there was not yet a proper appreciation for ballet as ballet rather than as a species of entertainment” (46). Nevertheless, as hoofers, rhythm tappers, and other tap acts found their places on these circuits, performers began pushing the creative boundaries of tap performance. In so doing, toe-tap was created.



Figure 1: Close-up of Anna Pavlova’s pointe shoes taken from a photo entitled “Pavlova dans sa loge” as published in Léandre Vaillat’s *Histoire de la Danse* from 1942.

Thesis Goals: Why Should We Care?

Since the evolution of dance history as an academic interest, few have noted the influence of American theatrical dance forms produced purely for the spectators' entertainment. In this thesis, I endeavor to prove that toe-tap is a style of dance with its own history. I will demonstrate where toe-tap came from and show how many individuals related to its development, specifically in America from the mid-1920s and into the Great Depression propelled by vaudeville and the rise of feature films with sound. Toe-tap is an unwanted child in the history of both ballet and tap. Though some writings may briefly mention this art form, more often than not, it is completely forgotten. This could be attributed to the fact that many do not take dance created for entertainment value seriously or else because neither ballet nor tap value their connection to toe-tap.

In the Postmodern age where fusion seems to be a growing trend, toe-tap serves as a reminder to dancers, choreographers, and dance historians that uniting distinct dance styles together is not an entirely new concept. Ballet and tap can seem like extremely divergent forms, but the fact remains that they have been physically and conceptually brought together. Indeed, it appears that a particularly productive phase in this relationship took place roughly between 1925 and 1935. This relationship did not develop in the high art concert dance arena, nor with the economically less fortunate on the street corners. Instead, it seemed to have blossomed from the low to middle class in vaudeville, Hollywood musicals, newsreels, and short films. During the decade between 1925 and 1935, the twenties were roaring invigorated by the influence of jazz music, vaudeville was going into decline, the "talkie" and the film musical were developing identities, and the Great Depression impacted everything. All of these circumstances were significant

catalysts for ballet, tap, and certainly for toe-tap. Could toe-tap's popularity by producers, performers, and theatrical shoe manufacturers alike be attributed to the fact that it continually produced maximum novelty at a relatively inexpensive price?

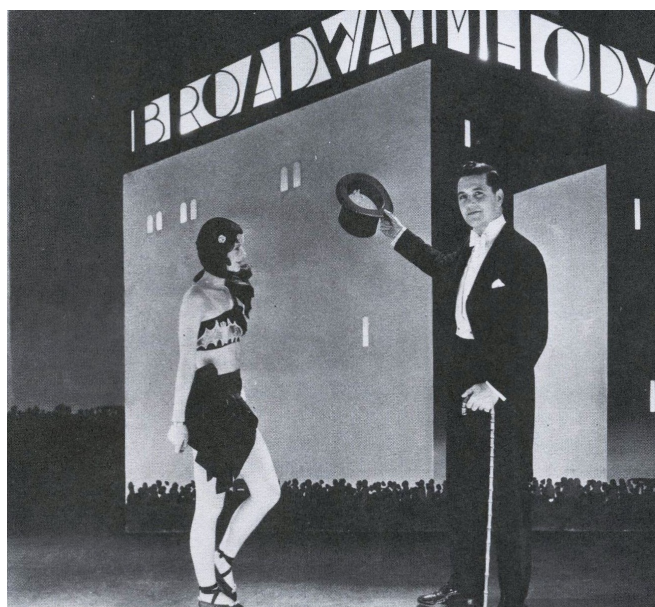
The style of toe-tap has its own history, as evidenced in part by articles and film footage. In this thesis, I hope to retrieve a place in dance history for toe-tap alongside its tap and ballet brethren. Based on many primary sources, I will attempt to uncover the precise beginnings of toe-tap. Before this can be determined, toe-tap must be situated in the American dance climate of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Exploring the differences between what were termed "toe dancers" and "ballet dancers" will reveal toe-tap's status in the dance world when it came into existence.

Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, who first came to America in 1916, undeniably had a powerful effect on early twentieth century American dance (Garafola, *Diaghilev's* 202). Apart from this powerhouse company, what other elements helped American ballet to evolve after the turn of the twentieth century? Not incidentally, the manufacture of dance footwear in America became paramount. I will investigate the history of pointe and tap shoes in an effort to determine how the two came to be combined, and I will examine the action of toe-tapping in order to discover physical requirements necessary to perform in this style.

There are some questions about toe-tap that are clearly unanswered, for instance, where were toe-tappers allowed to dance? What was the popular attitude toward the form? What role did the form of toe-tap play in the careers of those who attempted it? Finally, what did toe-tappers go on to do after their toe-tapping debuts in vaudeville or on the big screen? Asking these questions and beginning to find their answers should help us

to understand the reasons why the overall form seemed to die in the years after this highly productive decade.

In this writing, I am not making an endorsement for the rebirth of toe-tap. This is a dangerous form of dancing, especially when attempted by those not proficient in both ballet and tap. In attaching metal to the bottom of a pointe shoe, the legs and especially the ankles are at great risk of twisting and potentially breaking or spraining. Instead, my goal is to shed light on toe-tap as a dance form and the role it played in early twentieth century American dance.



Bessie Love and Charles King in *Broadway Melody*, the original backstager

Figure 2: The caption for this picture, taken from page 95 of Gerald Mast's *Can't Help Singin'*, read, "Bessie Love and Charles King in *Broadway Melody*, the original backstager." However, it was toe-tapper Joyce Murray, not Bessie Love, featured next to Charles King.

Review of Literature

Altogether, I have found eight film clips of toe-tapping, all of which are approximately one minute in length and have served as primary sources for this paper. Some of these clips came from newsreels, while others hailed from short films and musicals. The British Pathé Archive is host to four toe-tap gems, including the work of

brother-sister duo Dick and Edith Barstow and vaudevillian Renée Dymott, who described herself as “an acrobatic, contortionist toe, tap, and ballet dancer” (Hudd 50). From the land of Hollywood, some of the earliest musicals included Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer’s *The Broadway Melody* (1929)¹ and *The Hollywood Revue of 1929*²; both of these movies contained brief exhibitions of toe-tap performed by dancer Joyce Murray. Finally, short films like the Meglin Kiddies’ *Bubbles*³ and *Gus Edward’s Kiddie Revue*⁴ provided insight into the world of toe-tap as performed by children.⁵

While these clips were all stunning exhibitions of toe-tap, it is clear that the footage that had been polished into dazzling final products came with a bias. They do not tell the story of the dancers or choreographers themselves. We do not know of the rehearsal process or how many takes it took to film certain sections. However, an in-depth analysis of each film provides tiny clues as to what toe-tap would have been and will help us to extract as much information as we can from these sources.⁶

In order to discover more about the footwear being used during this time period, I have examined the early issues of *Dance Magazine*, initially named *The American Dancer*. The advertisements in this magazine provided prime examples of products available during

1 *The Broadway Melody*. Dir. Harry Beaumont. Perf. Charles King, Anita Page, and Bessie Love. Burbank, CA: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1929. Distributed by Turner Entertainment Co, 2005.

2 *The Hollywood Revue of 1929*. Dir. Charles Reisner. Perf. Conrad Nagel, Jack Benny, Norma Shearer, Joan Crawford, and Bessie Love. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1929. Distributed by Turner Entertainment Co, 2009.

3 *Bubbles* is available on Disc 2 of the *Meet Me in St. Louis*’ Special Edition DVD, released in 2004. *Meet Me in St. Louis*. Dir. Vincente Minnelli. Perf. Judy Garland, Margaret O’Brien, Mary Astor, Lucille Bremer, Leon Ames, and Tom Drake. Burbank, CA: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1944. Distributed by Warner Home Video, 2004.

4 *Classic Musical Shorts from the Dream Factory*. Perf. Walt Roesner, Leo Beers, Joseph Regan, Fuzzy Knight, and Frances White. Turner Entertainment Co, 2010.

5 The *Kiddie Revue* was distributed in a compilation of musical shorts released in 2010. Before this time, it had not been released into wide distribution, which would have made it much more difficult to use this source.

6 I have used Elspeth Brown’s 2005 “Reading the Visual Record” as a guide for formal analysis of the images and video clips in this thesis.

the 1920s and 1930s, as well as their featured selling points and pricing. Also, I have turned to the patent applications submitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office for examples of pointe shoes as well as tap and toe-tap shoes and attachments. These documents clearly detailed the intention behind the products being created and described how these products were to be fabricated. They also provided images of the final products and their featured characteristics. These patents led to the examination of the personal backgrounds belonging to their individual patent holders, notably Salvatore Capezio, the father of toe shoes produced in America, and William John Haney, the inventor of the tap and eventually toe-tap shoe. With the help of local historians Sheila Kell and Bonita Welch from Indiana's Jennings County Public Library, Haney's contributions to tap and toe-tap history are now unmistakably apparent.

In addition to these primary sources, I have scoured Proquest and the Library of Congress' archive of Digitized Newspapers in search of primary source writings on toe-tap and all of its surrounding subjects. Articles from the Library of Congress, predominantly works from New York publications, have helped me to understand the difference between toe dancers and ballet dancers around the turn of the twentieth century. "Chicot on Toe Dancing and the Toe Rock" from 1903 provided the history of toe dancing from the perspective of a Vaudevillian critic. Willa Cather's "Training for the Ballet" from *McClure's* in 1913 has been a helpful source for understanding the state of ballet in America before the official arrival of the Ballet Russes. Writings from the *Los Angeles Times*, in particular the words of Mary Mayer who wrote from 1929 on, have been invaluable as far as understanding conditions and trends in Hollywood during this time period.

Ned Wayburn's manual, *The Art of Stage Dancing*, was published in 1925. This book provided insight into the world of stage dancing in the years before sound was

being widely added to films. The book covered a wide range of topics including, but not limited to, modern stage dancing, musical comedy dance, tap and step dance, acrobatic dance, ballet, toe and specialty dance, costumes, stage make-up, diets for dancers, stage fright, and making a name in the industry. Barbara Stratyner's *Ned Wayburn and the Dance Routine: From Vaudeville to the Ziegfeld Follies* provided further insight into Ned Wayburn's work, although she only mentioned his work with toe-tap a few times.

Women/Writing/Teaching is an anthology of women's autobiographical stories compiled by Jan Schmidt. "Writing on the Bias," a chapter written by Linda Brodkey, currently a faculty member in the Literature Department at the University of California, San Diego, was originally published in *College English* in September 2004. This chapter provided insights into general and personal opinions of toe-tap from the mid-1950s. Her writing has been particularly helpful in examining a child's perception of toe-tap. Although Brodkey's childhood fell well after the 1930s, her point of view seemed to maintain ideas and opinions consistent with earlier perceptions of toe-tap.

Another primary source came from Rochelle Zide-Booth, former Joffrey dancer. In an email interview, Ms. Zide-Booth reminisced about her childhood training with Harriet Hctor and a specific excerpt of toe-tap choreographed by Robert Joffrey. Coupled with her journal from her time with the Joffrey, we gain insight into the physical memories and choreographic limitations of the form. Again, though these memories came well after the period in question, this was a first-hand recounting of performing toe-tap, and, as such, was an invaluable source.

Winthrop Palmer's *Theatrical Dancing in America: The Development of the Ballet from 1900* was originally published in 1945. Palmer divided his chapters on

American theatrical dancing into two categories, “The American Revolution” and “Russian Ballet.” The chapters included in the “American Revolution” relate to the early Moderns and the Big Four. “Russian Ballet” began with the Imperial Ballet, then the Ballets Russes, and continued through American Ballet and Ballet Theatre. Nowhere in this book from 1945 was vaudeville or its dancing mentioned. At this period of time, it simply was not taken seriously, and therefore there was no place made for it in writings about “Theatrical Dancing.” For secondary source writings on vaudeville, I have turned to Albert McLean’s *American Vaudeville As Ritual*, John DiMeglio’s *Vaudeville U.S.A.*, and *Show Biz from Vaude to Video* by Abel Green and Joe Laurie, Jr.

For source writings on dance in film, I have used to Jerome Delamater’s “Dance in Film Before 1930” chapter from *Dance in the Hollywood Musical* and Morris Dickstein’s chapters on Hollywood from *Dancing in the Dark: A Cultural History of the Great Depression*. Finally, Don Congdon’s *The Thirties: A Time to Remember*, which included chapters on dance, musicals, and background information on the Depression era. Richard Barrios’ *A Song in the Dark: The Birth of the Musical Film* offered background information on Vitaphone, chapters written on both the *The Broadway Melody* and *The Hollywood Revue of 1929*. Both the 1995 and 2010 editions of this book refer to toe-tap as “ballet-tap.”

Looking at American ballet history, more often than not, it seemed that toe-tap and eccentric toe dancing in general have been ignored, which makes sense considering the distinction between serious ballet dancers and toe dancers, those infamous possessors of questionable technique and artistry. George Amberg’s 1949 *Ballet in America: the Emergence of an American Art* began his American ballet history as early as 1785;

although he did mention the lack of a developed ballet tradition in America during the nineteenth century, he did not acknowledge the existence of toe dancers or toe-tappers.⁷

Toe-tap was completely left out of Olga Maynard's 1959 *The American Ballet*. In her *America Dances*, Agnes de Mille did mention the lack of institutions and funding in America before the arrival of the Ballets Russes.

More recent ballet scholarship included Barbara Barker's 1984 *Ballet or Ballyhoo*, which focused mainly on the contributions of three Italian ballerinas to American ballet before the turn of the twentieth century. This source laid out the role of the European ballet dancer in America during the Civil War and Restoration periods and their involvement in *The Black Crook*. Her work has been most useful in that it has greatly helped me to solidify my arguments about toe dancers and ballet-girls after the Civil War.

While writings like Carol Lee's 2002 *Ballet in Western Culture: A History of Its Origins and Evolution* began the story of American ballet with the Ballets Russes coming to America, 2003's textbook *No Fixed Points: Dance in the Twentieth Century* did not. Authors Nancy Reynolds and Malcolm McCormick did mention a category of ballet technique that they label as "shorthand," which did include toe-tapping (107). They did not explain why they use this label to describe these techniques. Rather than dwelling on the "shorthand ballet techniques," the authors moved on to ballet, what they labeled as "legitimate" without, again, explaining why they make this distinction.

In *The Pointe Book: Shoes, Training and Technique*, authors Janice Barringer and Sarah Schlesinger provided an overview of pointe history, pointe shoe construction, and

⁷ "Ballet dancers" and "toe dancers" are not terms that can be used interchangeably. Around the turn of the twentieth century, there existed a significant divide between these two types of dancers, and it is from the divide that the toe-tapper emerged. This topic will be explored further in the next chapter.

pointe shoe use which has proven to be a valuable source. Housed in the 302 pages of this book's second edition from 2004, there did exist one sentence on toe-tap in a paragraph about the "trick pointe dancing tradition."

As much as American toe-tap was left out of the categories of "theatrical dancing" and ballet, it was also left out of tap. *The Book of Tap* from Jerry Ames and Jim Siegelman in 1977 readily acknowledged the opportunities the talking picture provided vaudevillians. In naming the earliest clip of tapping on film, it asserted that the *Hollywood Revue of 1929* was first. However, *The Broadway Melody*, which premiered earlier in 1929 did include tap in the form of toe-tap. Although Constance Valis Hill's 2010 *Tap Dancing America: A Cultural History* provided enormous insight into the world of tap during this time period, she did not crossover with ballet to explore toe-tap.

In early editions of Rusty Frank's *Tap!: The Greatest Tap Dance Stars and Their Stories, 1900-1955*, there was absolutely no mention or image of toe-tapping. The revised edition from 1994 did include writings by Asian American dance team Toy and Wing. In addition to exhibition ballroom, Toy and Wing performed in vaudeville and on the silver screen.⁸ In future research, I expect to learn more about Toy and Wing's story in hopes of integrating them into the history of toe-tap.



Figure 3: Wayburn pointe shoe, published in his *The Art of Stage Dancing* in 1925. Found in between pages 194 and 195.

⁸ Dorothy Toy performed a unique toe-tap in the musical short *Deviled Ham* from 1937 (*Deviled Ham*). Wing stated that their partnership began in 1935 (Frank 106), while according to Toy, 1936 was the year when she and Wing tried to enter the "big time" and sought out teachers to educate the team on contemporary tap dancing (Frank 108).

CHAPTER 2 – TOE-TAP: THE WHEN, WHAT, AND HOW

The Ballet Dancer vs. the Toe Dancer, the Ballet Girl, and the Mule

On February 7, 1902, an article appeared in New York's *The Sun* entitled "Toe Dance for the Court." This particular Supreme Court case concerned ballet master Filiberto Marcheti, who was attempting to sue the Metropolitan Street Railway Company for \$20,000 in damages for an ankle injury suffered on one of their street cars. *Danseuse* Mazie Follette was called to testify by the railway company, as she had taken classes from Marcheti since the time of the accident. When asked if she were a ballet-girl, Marcheti replied, "Ballet girl? Why ballet-girls get \$15 a week and I get \$150. I am a fancy dancer, a prima ballerina assoluta - a premiere [sic] danseuse" ("Toe Dance").⁹ Another account of this event, published in the *New York Times* also on February 7, recorded Follette's reply as, "Sir, I am a prima ballerina assoluta, a premiere danseuse, or what is vulgarly called a premiere. I am no chorus girl or toe dancer" ("Danced in").

Though the words of Follette's response differed, the tone and content of her message remained the same. Follette, an accomplished American ballet dancer performing around the turn of the twentieth century, very clearly set up the difference between the two types of dancers that use pointe shoes in their craft. There were those, like herself, who had achieved the rank of prima ballerina assoluta and *première danseuse* and were therefore "ballet dancers." Everyone else, the ballet-girls, chorus girls, and toe dancers, belonged to the second category, all of which were far inferior to the ballet dancer. And if the ballet dancer were superior to these other classes of dancers, it

⁹ In respect to MLA style, any source cited without a page number is only one page in length, as is the case with the majority of these historic newspaper articles.

stood to reason that she was far greater than someone who had been labeled “eccentric” toe dancer or a toe-tapper.

In America, there has long been a hierarchical divide between the “classes” of those who have used toe shoes in their dance. Perhaps this historical friction between the “true artistes,” the ballet dancers, and the mere toe dancers explains some of the animosity toe-tap inherited when it came into its own spotlight.

Less than twenty years before Marcheti’s lawsuit took place, an article on “ballet-girls” was published in St. Paul, Minnesota’s *Sunday Globe*.¹⁰ “Fairies of the Stage” from October 19, 1884, defined the characteristics of a “ballet-girl” as being a dancer from the working class who was rarely able to elevate her professional status. In this article, an unnamed gentleman “...well versed in the business of the ballet...” stated that the occurrence of a ballet-girl’s promotion within the field of dance was: “So seldom that I do not now recall an instance. They are not recognized as apprentices, and consequently are given no encouragement or assistance” (“Fairies”).

It was estimated that these ballet-girls from the “Fairies” article received six to eight dollars a week, more on average than women in other professions could have hoped to attain. At the same time, these dancers were forced to tolerate an unfortunate attitude toward their occupation: “People generally have a poor opinion of ballet-girls, but it is because they don’t know any more of them than what they see on stage” (“Fairies”). Thus, ballet-girls had no hope of improving their social status as their reputations had been compromised as a result of their profession. This sad state of affairs dates back to

¹⁰ The article was originally printed in the *Cincinnati Times Star*. The writing did not mention for which companies these particular ballet-girls were performing.

the eighteenth century when dancers at the Paris Opéra were forced to take lovers in order to survive.¹¹

Not only were American ballet-girls looked down upon from a societal standpoint, but also from within their own companies. The hierarchy of dancers in an American opera company, as printed in the *Chicago Tribune* in 1872, was as follows:

The dancing members of a company are divided into ‘premieres,’ ‘coryphees,’ ‘figurantes,’ and ‘corps de ballet;’ the ‘coryphees’ being educated to their profession, the ‘corps de ballet’ merely adopting it as temporary livelihood, and the ‘figurantes’ merely assisting in tableaux, marches, etc. There is, of course, a vast difference between the pay and status of the major and minor members of a company, but then there is a vast difference in work, too... The premiere danseuse studies at Milan for years, while the ‘super’ has but to say: ‘My lord, the carriage waits,’ and the figurant, or ‘extra ballet’ girl has nothing to do at all but show her figure. (“Stage-Slang”)

The members of the corps de ballet and figurants were composed of American dancers who had little or no formal dance training. In part, this was the case because America was host to very few dance schools. The Metropolitan Opera’s school, for example, did not open until 1909, even though the company was founded in 1883 (Moore 144).¹² Since the corps de ballet and figurants did not have refined training to fall back on, they presented their bodies to the public, or as Linda Tomko wrote in *Dancing Class*, “A buxom figure and willingness to wear very scanty garb were requirements that this cadre of working women shared with female burlesque performers” (66).

11 For more on these original ballet-girls, see Judith Chazin-Bennahum’s chapter on “The Dark Side of White” from *The Lure of Perfection*, pages 221-238.

12 According to her unpublished autobiography, as printed in *Studies in Dance History*, Helen Tamiris entered the *corps de ballet* at the Metropolitan Opera in 1920 at the age of fifteen. Tamiris had taken classes at Henry St. Settlement, where she was taught to move from the “...heart and lungs – and soul” (Tamiris 10). When she began at the opera, she was required to trade in this training for what she labels the Italian method. Performing at the Opera, Tamiris received twelve dollars and three free lessons a week; out of that salary, she was expected to pay for her own toe shoes (Tamiris 9). For her second season, she was paid seventeen dollars a week (Tamiris 11). Tamiris wrote, “The highest paid was \$38 - a week – only the oldest girls who had been in the ballet [for] 8 years or more – The minimum wage for chorus girls on Broadway – whom we considered untrained dancers – for all [that] was required of them to get into a chorus at that time was good looks – a few buck and wings steps and a high kick – was established by Chorus Equity at \$35.00 a week” (Tamiris 12).

“A Day with a Ballet Girl,” published in the *New York Sun* in 1886, followed Maria Sims, a corps dancer from New York’s Metropolitan Opera House. At the time Sims was with the company, the premières of the Metropolitan comprised twelve English ballerinas, four Italians, and several French, Russian, German, and Swedish dancers. It seemed qualified dancing talent was a foreign import for opera companies, resulting in a divide in experience and capabilities among members of the same troupe.¹³ The article made a great distinction between the classes of dancers performing on the same stage. It did not appear as if Americans who were not trained in reputedly established institutions could aspire to achieve the success on the opera stage that foreign dancers could.

Derogatory terms were used to describe the American ballet-girl and her trade. “The Dancing Beauty” from San Francisco’s *Morning Call* was published on November 30, 1890. In this writing, the author referred to ballet-girls as “mules.” In fact, the *Morning Call* author went as far as to state that, “It is true there is no parallel between a ballet-dancer and a mule beyond the fact that both are well known as eccentric kickers and as tough as Joey B” (“The Dancing”). Tomko wrote that these women were also called “broilers” (66).

This was where the confusion surrounding the terms “ballet dancer,” “ballet-girl” and “toe dancer” emerged. There was no standard name for second class dancers who claimed an association with ballet, including those who filled the lowest ranks of opera

13 According to Willa Cather, “Until Dippel and Gatti-Casazza went into the management at the Metropolitan Opera House, not only were the *premières* but the entire *corps de ballet* were brought over from Europe every year, and this notwithstanding the fact that New York was full of poor girls of every nationality, who were working in sweat-shops and department stores for six dollars a week, while the ballet pays eighteen and twenty” (86). For more information on the Metropolitan Opera House’s Training Program, see “Abstemious Life of the Successful Ballet Dancer” from the January 2, 1910 edition of the *New York Tribune*, page 5. Also, see Lillian Moore’s “The Metropolitan Opera Ballet, 1883-1951,” pages 142- 154 in *Echoes of American Ballet* and George Dorris’ “Dance and the New York Opera War, 1906-1912” from the *Dance Chronicle*.

companies or else were employed by vaudeville houses, music halls, or nightclubs.

According to Barbara Barker in *Ballet or Ballyhoo*, “No matter what their rank, all dancers were referred to in the press as ‘ballet girls’” (17). Both ballet dancers and toe dancers referred to themselves as toe dancers, for both did indeed dance on their toes. Ballet-girls and toe dancers, who were not as well trained, benefited from being associated with ballet dancers. Dancing in lower class establishments like vaudeville, their average audience, including journalists and those like the counsel questioning Mazie Follette, did not necessarily understand the difference between types of toe dancers. Outside of the opera, American ballet-girls danced on their toes and performed their kicks neither burdened by the shadow of the ballet dancer nor the requirement of proper ballet technique.

Genuine ballet dancers were most certainly not “eccentric kickers,” as stated in the *Morning Call* clipping. One writing from 1913 very clearly stated that kicks were infrequent occurrences in classic dance. For classical ballet dancers, it was not appropriate to lift the foot above the hip: “The high-kicking which has disgraced our stage for so long has nothing to do with the ballet. It came from the cabarets of Paris, from the *can-can*. But there it is not ballet dancing; it is called kicking” (Cather 93). And if this action was not appropriate in 1913, it stands to reason that it certainly would not have been appropriate before the turn of the twentieth century.

The American ballet community was hesitant to add steps from outside the movement vocabulary, particularly flashier steps from lower class establishments, like kicks, in order to startle and excite audiences. Toe dancers turned to tricks in order to

create their own form of movement.¹⁴ And it was here that the distinction between the two types of toe dancers became defined. On June 6, 1897, the *Sacramento Daily Record* published a work from an unnamed author from the *New York Herald* commenting on the state of ballet before the turn of the century:

Dancing to the real dancer is a delight, and as invigorating and inspiring as a gallop across the downs to a real horsewoman. The only ballet girl who suffers is the acrobatic dancer of to-day, the terrible young woman who seems to believe she is reaching the high [sic] of art when she kicks a tambourine three feet above her head or is exemplifying the acme of grace when she does 'the split' – that outrage on art and nature. ("Music")

This same unnamed author continued the rest of the article declaring his or her disgust with the current trends in professional dancing. They labeled the addition of ostentatious steps as mere fads with which the public would eventually grow bored. Thus, with the trend dying out, the author inserted their expectation that graceful ballet dancing would eventually return to its proper place unburdened by distasteful additions.

Vaudevillian critic Chicot wrote a piece on toe dancers that was published in the *Evening World's Home Magazine* on July 18, 1903.¹⁵ In this work, Chicot explored the history of toe dancing in popular entertainment, beginning with American toe dancer Bessie Clayton, whom Chicot believed was responsible for lighting the spark for movement invention on toe shoes (Fig. 4 and 26).¹⁶ Chicot stressed the universal importance of proper training for toe dancers, as he stated that in ballet schools: "No dancer was considered qualified unless she were able to traverse the stage diagonally

14 For an example of toe dancing from March 24, 1896, see Amy Muller's performance, available on the Library of Congress website ([Amy Muller](#)).

15 "Chicot" was a pen name for influential vaudeville critic Epes Winthrop Sargent. For more information on Chicot's writings, see Edward Azlant, "Screenwriting for the Early Silent Film: Forgotten Pioneers, 1897-1911."

16 For more insight on Bessie Clayton's career, see Camille Hardy, "Bessie Clayton: An American Genée." *Dance Chronicle*. 2:4 (1978-1979), 251-278. Also, "'Don't Dance Down Stairs,' Say Insurance Cos. – 'But I Will,' Says Bessie Clayton," published in Chicago's *Day Book*.

without touching her heels to the floor” (Chicot). When writing about ballet schools, Chicot did not make any distinction between toe dancers and ballet dancers, even though the rest of his article focused on toe dancers. This is yet another example of the unfortunate habit of lumping together all dancers into one category.¹⁷

In the writing from the *Evening World's Home Magazine*, Chicot commented on the trend toe dancers have of trading grace for impressive feats of great difficulty. In his opinion, this showy style of dancing transformed toe dancing into a contest of sensationalism and endurance completely devoid of artistic quality. Among the exploits mentioned were ascending and descending stairs, walking on champagne bottles, leaping hurdles, back bends, picking up objects with teeth, and jumping in and out of bath tubs, all the while remaining *en pointe*. Chicot did not ignore the obvious dangers faced by the ambitious toe dancers of his time: “Most of those who appeal to an audience pay more or



Figure 4: The heading from the Chicot writing published in the *Evening World's Home Magazine* displaying a sampling of toe dancers from 1903.

17 For footage of toe dancers from 1903 provided by the Library of Congress, see *Dance, Franchonetti Sisters*.

less of a price for their efforts to amuse, but in no other branch is the price greater than it is in the dancing field, and among dancers it is the toe-workers who suffer most” (Chicot).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the average American audience demanded novelty from their performers, leaving toe dancers to satisfy this craving. Rather than dividing toe dancers into categories like “ballet dancer” and “toe dancer,” in 1908, *Hampton’s Broadway Magazine* declared, “The best of spontaneous dancers are American men and women. Spontaneous, I say, because a ballet dancer is a trained monstrosity or a finely developed machine, all technique and rule of toe” (“The Present” 504). According to this statement, which notably was published for the stage dancing community, ballet dancers had training and truly knew how to dance on their toes. They could perform steps, for that is what their years of training had provided them. Stage dancers, including toe dancers, were not finely developed, nor were they highly technical as dancers. However, it was the unpretentious and spontaneous qualities that made their acts exceptional, inspiring demand from audiences.

The *Broadway Magazine* article also mentioned that the “dramatic or classic” forms of dance, in general, never garnered great popularity in the States, citing lack of culture as a possible explanation. In a society beginning to be influenced by rag and jazz music, audiences were easily satisfied. The magazine article stated, “Ragtime, soft-shoe jigs, knockabout “eccentric” dances (to use a professional term) – anything which meets the syncopated time and keeps our blood a-jumping is all that is required” (“The Present” 505). In a column from the celebrated dance critic John Martin in 1928, he identified the dire need for audiences to be trained in dance appreciation (“The Dance”). It appears that

in this twenty year gap from 1908 to 1928, American audiences remained consistently ignorant regarding what they should be expecting from their professional dancers apart from spontaneity and syncopated rhythm.

Though American popular performers had found the required excitement and tempo, this same article worriedly asserted that movement innovation had reached a relative plateau in 1908:

As a result, we have developed this form of dancing until there is nothing novel left in it. It has been tramped and trodden dry. Witness the paucity of new steps in vaudeville... Not a sound is heard as the men go through the old steps; but let them hit upon the slightest innovation – and the house is filled with hand claps and gallery whistles. The thing is not dying. The lure of such dancing can never die. But it is at a standstill. (“The Present” 505)

The cry for Terpsichorean advancement continued later in this same writing: “Give us novelty. Give us interesting things. Give us anything to get away from the dull monotony of step and tune which seem to have fallen upon our excellent American dancers” (“The Present” 506).

In what can be interpreted as an attempt to widely educate audiences, American novelist Willa Cather wrote an article for *McClure's Magazine* entitled “Training for the Ballet: Making American Dancers” in October 1913. With the imminent arrival of Russian ballet dancers on American soil, Cather identified skirt dancing, kicking, and “eccentric” dancing as labels attempting to disguise their true identities, nothing more than bad dancing. As far as toe dancing was concerned, Cather stated, “There is an easy kind of toe-dancing, a ‘fake’ performance which we often see generously applauded in musical comedy... This is not toe-dancing at all, in the proper sense, but a clumsy counterfeit which requires no skill” (90). And thus, the distinction between ballet dancers and toe dancers was widely circulated. The Ballets Russes, who had not yet graced

United States soil, were ballet dancers. American toe dancers performed musical comedy with no skill.

Two years later, Ogden City, Utah's *Ogden Standard* printed an article entitled "The Made in America Dancer." The unnamed author noticed the trend of American ballet dancers performing at a higher caliber than ever before. The article mentioned ballet schools that were emerging in large cities like New York, for instance at the Metropolitan, and also in Chicago (Fig. 31). With quality ballet schools serving this country, American dancers were not at as much at a disadvantage to their European counterparts. The article stated, "More and more the eccentric gyration of the vaudeville and musical comedy stars is becoming modified into something approaching the artistic" ("The Made"). American ballet was in the process of changing, making way for Americans to finally play prominent roles. The same article also mentioned, "America has its Claytons and its Adelaides, but their numbers are going to be greater before many years" ("The Made").¹⁸ The author considered Bessie Clayton and Little Adelaide among the great dancers America had produced. While this article predicted the growth of ballet in America, it used the example of vaudevillian toe dancers to set the standard for future dancers.

Toe-Tap Beginnings

In 1898, the left foot of vaudevillian toe dancer Mazie King was chosen to serve as a model for the first x-ray photograph of a foot *en pointe*. According to King, dancing with Gilmore and Leonard's "Hogan's Alley" company helped her to build up the strength needed to stand on top of her shoes: "They thought that naturally I must have

¹⁸ For more on toe dancers around the turn of the century, including information on the famous vaudeville act Adelaide and Hughes, see Richard Kislán's "Toe" section from *Hoofing on Broadway*, pages 35-38.

developed great strength in my big toes and that the photograph would show the exact position of the toe in this class of dancing” (“X-Rays”). In this quote, “this class” referred, of course, to toe dancing.



Figure 5: According to the *San Francisco Call* from September 18, 1898, this was the first x-ray taken of a toe dancer’s foot, which belonged to Mazie King (“X-Rays”).¹⁹



Figure 6: Song Sheet Cover for “My Sweet Heart, Fond Heart, True Heart, Darling Mazie,” c. 1899 (Gilmore). Found in the New York Public Library’s Digital Gallery.

King may be among one of the earliest to toe-tap, though participating in this form was not her initial intention. In her dance career, King estimated she went through about two pairs of toe shoes a week (“X-Rays”). Her slippers, fashioned of satin, canvas, and a leather sole, needed to be broken-in on a regular basis. In order to do so, King performed a set of toe exercises:

...which I practice from two to three hours a day, generally from 8 to 10 in the morning and from 4 to 5 in the afternoon, on a small, smooth board, which I place on the floor. This is what we call ‘toe tapping.’ For each set of toe taps I count 500. (“X-Rays”)

¹⁹ On page 39 of Barbara Stratyner’s *Ned Wayburn and the Dance Routine*, an x-ray of King’s is displayed, dated 1899 from the *Billy Rose Theater Collection* at the *New York Public Library for the Performing Arts*.

And thus, toe-tapping was initially a method of preparing and softening toe shoes for performance, not a form of dance.²⁰

As far as mixing toe shoes with metal taps, Ned Wayburn was one of the first American choreographers to use this medium in his work. In his lifetime, Wayburn performed many roles in the theatrical world. He was a vaudevillian performer, stage director and producer, and founder of Ned Wayburn's Training School for the Stage in New York City and eventually Chicago, among many other accomplishments (Kislan 48).²¹ In 1925, Wayburn published his practical guide, *The Art of Stage Dancing*.

According to Wayburn, "Modern stage dancing differs from social or ballroom dancing in that it is the kind of dancing that one can commercialize" (Wayburn 23). And commercialize on dance he did. Wayburn delighted in preparing his dancers to perform "bread and butter dances," in other words, dances that he knew would be easily sold: "...something you can sell most easily in the present show market, and get not only food and raiment and lodging, but build up a savings bank account for the future as well" (Wayburn 103).

Continuing his efforts to sell dance efficiently, Wayburn developed Ned Wayburn's Modern Americanized Ballet Technique. Wayburn believed he had conceived a method of teaching ballet that eliminated the need for a prolonged period of training, "...fits the pupil for a stage appearance in the briefest possible length of time" (Wayburn 121). Wayburn boasted that devoting a great number of years and a lot of sweat to

20 King not only toe-tapped to break in her shoes, but she performed in the style. Barbara Stratyner wrote, "Indeed, even before 1913, she frequently toe-tapped down the staircases of landmark towers and buildings as a publicity stunt" (38).

21 In an excerpt from Fred Astaire's autobiography, Astaire recalled: "We [Fred and Adele Astaire] were not under Wayburn personally. He had teachers who took charge of us. But he was kind to us, and I recall that he came in and showed me some buck-and-wing steps. I was surprised that such a big man could dance" (32).

training was outdated and unproductive. Wayburn knew that it was the amateur dancer that was being recruited to dance on professional stages: “There never before has been so great a demand for stage dancers as exists now, and the supply for both solo and ensemble work barely suffices” (Wayburn 25). This call for dancers could have been related to the economic boom in America during the 1920s coupled with a growing cry for novelty and entertainment from spectators. Knowing of the lack of supply and increasing demand for proficient ballet dancers, Wayburn suggested a method he hoped would revolutionize the entire industry.

Ned Wayburn’s method of teaching ballet required completing twenty lessons, focusing on intense limbering and stretching to develop the back, legs, and feet. Wayburn wrote that his secret was out: “It is our special foundation work in limbering and stretching combined with my Americanized Ballet Technique that builds our American pupil into a strong, healthy, flexible, graceful person, well prepared for advancement into the beautiful art of the ballet” (Wayburn 124). Practicing at home for three hours daily and memorizing ballet positions and steps were the only steps Wayburn believed were necessary for a dancer to perform what he referred to as ballet, but was in fact toe dancing. After completing these twenty lessons, Wayburn deemed his pupils prepared to be hired. Wayburn believed, based on his own experience in vaudeville, that the stage was truly the place where the dancer would learn their craft, a sort of “earn-while-you-learn” program or else a post-Industrial Revolution factory for churning out mediocre dancers.

In addition to teaching ballet through stretching and limbering, Wayburn’s schools also admittedly taught “tricks,” steps whose sole intention was for dancers to

produce as much applause as possible. Wayburn stated, “Many of our pupils go directly from our courses to the professional stage, since it would be difficult for them to earn a supporting salary in the musical comedy field doing straight ballet work alone” (Wayburn 125). With this statement, Wayburn returned to the idea of selling “bread and butter.” Wayburn did testify that tricks are secondary to actual dancing and that they should not dominate entire routines if the dancer aspires to remain a dancer and not become an acrobat. Apart from teaching individual trick steps, his schools also offered classes in eccentric and acrobatic toe dance:

It is at the behest of the great American audience that these newer toe dances are with us. You and the rest of the public that constitute our audiences demand action, tricks—or at least tricky and novel touches here and there—in your dancing entertainment. The old stuff doesn’t ‘get over’ with you any more. So we invent new things that present what you are bound to like, and the eccentric and acrobatic toe dances are the result. It may be jumping down a flight of steps on the toes, or a continued hopping on one toe for 16 counts to music, or a swinging of one leg back and forth, like a pendulum, in an acrobatic way while the dancer hops on one toe—such stunts as these are the applause-getters nowadays, and they are well worth applauding, too, for they are pleasing demonstrations of real skill, and are acquired by the dancer only after long and continued effort and practice. Few if any, I am sure, fully appreciate the time and labor it takes to make a modern toe dancer, one who shall be able to perform something new and catchy in a clever way,—a real feat nowadays, and one that theatrical producers are quick to see and seize when it appears. (Wayburn 137)

Wayburn knew that both the eccentric and acrobatic toe dance required a strong basis in ballet technique before allowing this advanced work to take place (Wayburn 137).

For more advanced dancers, Wayburn focused on developing specialty acts, or dancers who wanted to be identified “...as the representative of that form of dancing” (Wayburn 141). Specialty dancing was an extremely broad category:

Clogging, the ballet, interpretive and toe dances—why enumerate them. Let it go at this: Any form of dancing that you like best and are most efficient in can be made *your* specialty dance if you give it personality, atmosphere,—if you vitalize it so that it stands out alive and distinctive—your very own. (Wayburn 143)

Any form of stage dance could have been considered a specialty if a person took the time and effort to explore their individual specialty and use their physical and mental capacities in order to push its boundaries.²²

It is documented that Wayburn set pieces with toe-tap as early as the 1910s (Stratyner 18). For his choreography, he fitted metal plates to the tips of his dancers' pointe shoes and then nailed them in place. An excerpt from *Ned Wayburn and the Dancing Routine: From Vaudeville the 'Ziegfield Follies'* reads:

Toe-tapping was popular, but never really successful as a group technique. Although audiences reveled in its physical difficulties, Wayburn and other choreographers found it inflexible. As in conventional tap work, the sound elements could not be properly controlled: a dancer could not change position or direction without making noise. Moreover, it is unlikely that many dancers could achieve full articulation given the nature of their shoes. (Stratyner 18)

Despite the limitations of toe-tap, Wayburn did experiment with the medium. He worked with Bessie Clayton, the eccentric toe dancer described by Chicot. In a work entitled "The Capitol Steps" from 1913, Wayburn required Clayton to descend a staircase performing pendulum kicks²³: "The pendulum kick, a trademark of toe tapping, was a sequence of hops, with the working leg moving from front to back" (Stratyner 38).²⁴

The Heavy Metal Revolution

American toe shoes were rapidly evolving at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Barker wrote, "In the 1860s, pointe shoes were not

22 For more on Ned Wayburn, his schools, and techniques, see Richard Kislán's chapter on "The Dance Directors" from *Hoofing on Broadway*, pages 46-54. Also, see Barbara Stratyner's *Ned Wayburn and the Dance Routine*, *Studies in Dance History*, No. 13.

23 Pendulum kicks can be seen in Joyce Murray's performance from *The Hollywood Revue of 1929*.

24 For a review of this performance, see "Dancing on a Flight of Steps Gives Thrills" from New York's *Sun*, August 24, 1913.

blocked and sized to support the foot, but were soft and pliable like today's ballet slipper and could only be worn for one or two performances" (22). Chicot's description of toe shoes in 1903 was as follows:

Usually they are made of satin, though sometimes kid is employed because of its more lasting qualities...There is no sole to the shoe, in the accepted sense of the term; a small piece of leather which runs down the centre of the shoe not quite to the tip of the toe taking its place. The lower half is much thicker than the part nearer the heel, this thickness running just beyond the commencement of the instep. (Chicot).

In *The Art of Dancing: Its Theory and Practice* from 1919, a guide intended for amateurs and teachers alike, American dance master Frank Leslie Clendenen wrote that toe shoes should not have included hardened toes, nor should the shank of the shoe be made of steel.²⁵ Clendenen affirmed that hardened shanks were being used by those who were not strong enough to dance *sur les pointes* on their own accord: "If this is necessary and you are too lazy to practice development exercises you will never be a toe dancer" (76).²⁶ This means by at least 1919, hard shanks and boxes were being used in American pointe shoes.

Before 1919, where could Americans purchase pointe shoes? Although these shoes were being produced in this country, Americans did not always trust them.²⁷ Ballet

25 Shank: a firm element incorporated into the inner soles of pointe shoes helping dancers to remain *en pointe* by supporting the arches of the feet. During this time period, not all toe shoes included shanks, though those that did included shanks of varying stiffness, ranging from leather, as mentioned in the Chicot quotation, to wood and steel.

26 Later on in her manuscript, Clendenen also stated, "The first thing a lazy toe dancer gets is a pair of box toe, steel lined ballet shoes, which usually makes her about as graceful as a horse walking on its hind legs" (86).

27 In his 1903 piece, Chicot mentioned, "Special shoes are employed in ballet and toe dancing, and the best are obtainable at only two shops. There are dozens of ballet-shoe makers located in this city, but only two of them have the practical monopoly of the better class of work, their shoes alone having been found to equal the imported article." He did not write the names of the two shops, but my educated guess is that Capezio's shop, founded 1887, was one of them. Baum's Incorporated was another theatrical footwear manufacturer, also founded in 1887, but it was and is located in Philadelphia.

teacher and scholar Lillian Moore wrote that around the turn of the century, dancers at the Metropolitan Opera Ballet turned to reputable foreign sources for their shoes:

At the time, good ballet slippers were unobtainable in the United States, and each year a singer in the chorus, who lived in Milan and went home every summer, would take orders from all the dancers and purchase shoes for them wholesale (at less than \$1 per pair!) from the famous ballet-slipper maker, Nicolini. (Moore 147)

Buying Italian toe shoes wholesale may have been efficient for dancers at the Metropolitan Opera, but it was not necessarily an effective system for the rest of the country. The course of pointe shoe fabrication in America was undeniably altered by the emigration of one Italian man in 1887. This same year, Salvatore Capezio opened a storefront in New York City, which was strategically located across the street from the Metropolitan Opera (Haller). In its infancy, the store offered only shoe repairs, though the company's trajectory was altered one serendipitous day when opera singer Jean de Reske came to Capezio, imploring him to replicate a pair of slippers he had misplaced for that evening's performance. After fulfilling this order, Capezio received more customers from the Opera, as he began building his reputation as a shoemaker.

Pavlova took a pair of Capezio's pointe shoes with her on one of her cross-country tours in 1910 (Haller); she wildly commended Salvatore Capezio for his work and used her public platform to spread his name to her admirers. In addition to Pavlova, Capezio catered to some of the biggest names on the stage and in a rising town across the country called Hollywood, including John and Ethel Barrymore, Lillian Russell, Enrico Caruso, Marilyn Miller, and Eleanor Powell ("Salvatore Capezio").²⁸ One article from the *Los Angeles Times* in 1925 estimated: "The Capezio establishment in New York turns out

²⁸ Caruso reportedly loved Capezio's shoes so much that he, "...would come to his establishment and totally disrupt all work in the Capezio factory with his cheery playfulness" ("Intimate").

2000 pairs of shoes a week; all hand-made and practically all for the theatrical profession” (“Intimate”).²⁹ While serving the Metropolitan Opera, Capezio also provided shoes for some of the most reputable ensembles of his time, for instance the Boston Opera, the Chicago Opera, and eventually the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo (“Salvatore Capezio”).

Capezio’s company not only produced shoes, but it also served as a starting place for future producers of pointe shoes. A few of these former employees would eventually become Capezio’s competition, and cut-throat rivalries these were. Capezio employee James Selva quit his job in order to establish Selva & Sons in 1925. Four years later, in 1929, a 27-year old Selva was sent to jail for six months after paying another Capezio employee to steal lists of the names of Capezio’s customers (“Jailed”). This same employee, a shipping clerk by the name of Samuel Felson, also reportedly altered the products Capezio was sending out, “...occasionally lodging tacks in ballet slippers” (“Jailed”).

Patents became the way Capezio and many other shoemakers could legally protect their work from one another.³⁰ Most of the dancing shoes being produced in the first quarter of the twentieth century were not patented. Selva filed for his first toe shoe patent in 1926 (Selva, “Dancing”). Capezio did not apply for his first patent until 1927, although we know he was creating toe shoes well before that time (Capezio, Patent 1,872,641).³¹

29 For Capezio’s methods of making pointe shoes, see his patents: “Ballet Slipper and Method of Making the Same” accepted 1928, “Toe and Ballet Slipper” accepted 1929, “Ballet Slipper” accepted 1931, “Ballet Slipper and Manufacture of Same” and “Ballet Slipper or Toe Shoe and Method of Making the Same” accepted 1932.

30 See “Capezio v. Chicago Theatrical Shoe Co.; Same v. Harris” from the Circuit Court of Appeals on February 5, 1937.

31 Unlike other shoemakers, Capezio patented his products with the same or similar titles. Therefore, in an effort to clarify Capezio’s in-text citations, I have written their patent numbers instead of titles.

The first patent for an American pointe shoe was submitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office on October 3, 1919 (Hopkins 1).³² Named the “Dancing Slipper” by its inventor Edwin Hopkins of New York, this shoe was intended to improve upon existing toe shoes. Hopkins mounted a pivot point, made from a ball bearing, onto the bottom of the toe shoe’s box (Hopkins 1). He hoped that the addition of this fixed point would help the dancers to produce more turns. Hopkins also believed that the addition of this pivot would make toe shoes last longer (Hopkins 2).

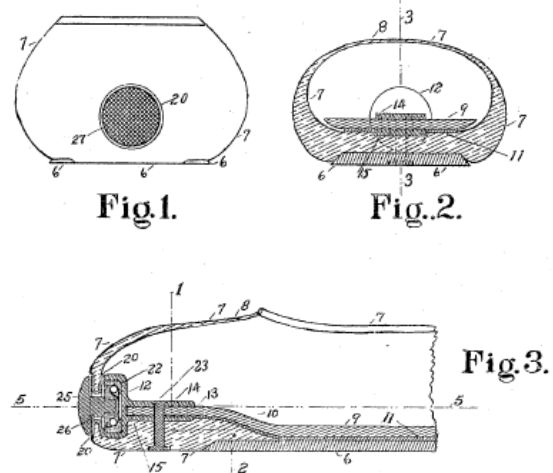


Figure 7: Hopkins’ “Dancing Slipper” with its ball bearing pivot point. Patent 1,564,676. Filed October 5, 1919 (Hopkins A).

A theme of many patent applications was how to increase the longevity of the shoe. Hopkins stated, “Customarily a pair of toe dancing slippers are worn out within a week or ten days of performances. The abrasion at the toe wears the silk away. The substitution of the pivot in this invention will have the advantage of making the slippers much more durable” (Hopkins 2). In 1925, inventor Edwin Tilton stiffened the box of his toe shoe with reinforced lining and leather (Tilton). Later that same year, Max Rovick of Chicago reinforced the box of his toe shoe by placing raw-hide between the other layers (Rovick).

³² Patents are cited in the References section with the date they were issued, as per MLA requirements. However, as the period between submission and acceptance varies a great deal from patent to patent, the dates I am using all refer to the original filing date. This is in an effort to more closely approximate when the shoe or attachment was actually invented. Also, the patents are made up of pages of images and pages of written explanation. Since the pages of explanation are already numbered (1, 2, 3...), when referring to the pages of images, I am using letters (A, B, C...).

In early 1926, Adolph Gabriel of New York filed an application to patent a toe shoe with a movable piece of fabric that covered the box and the vamp (Gabriel). After the shoe had been used and the piece of fabric worn, it could be removed or replaced, leaving the shoe in presentable condition (Gabriel 1). Selva did not approve of Gabriel's method and the "...unsightly appearance of the slipper..." with the added patch (Selva, "Dancing" 1). In 1926, Selva filed to patent his own slipper, constructed of canvas, glue, and satin (Selva, "Dancing"). With this shoe, Selva added a second "sub-patch" in a layer below the outer layer (Selva, "Dancing" 1). Thus, with this reinforcement, there was another layer of canvas for the toe dancer to dance on once the outer layer of the shoe had been worn through.³³

By the time Capezio began applying for patents, he was able to provide many intricate details of his refined designs and production methods. On October 22, 1927, Capezio filed two related patents, one named "Ballet Slipper and Method of Making the Same," the other named "Toe and Ballet Slipper." The first application describes the sole and the shank construction for Capezio shoes, while the second describes the design of the reinforced construction of the box (Fig. 8 and 9). The box of a Capezio toe shoe in the late 1920s was stiffened with a cushion added on the inside of the shoe (Capezio, Patent 1,704,281 1). The box was covered with many layers of fabric and finished with a layer of stitched reinforcement, covering not only the toe, but also the area underneath the ball of the foot that received a great deal of the shoe's wear and tear (Capezio, Patent 1,704,281 1). In further efforts to prolong the dancing life of his shoes, Capezio

33 In further efforts to revolutionize the toe shoe, Selva also submitted an application in 1927 to patent a toe shoe without drawstrings or ribbons, both of which were replaced by an elastic strap. Fashioned after a sandal, this could be referred to as the first t-strap toe shoe (Selva, "Toe").

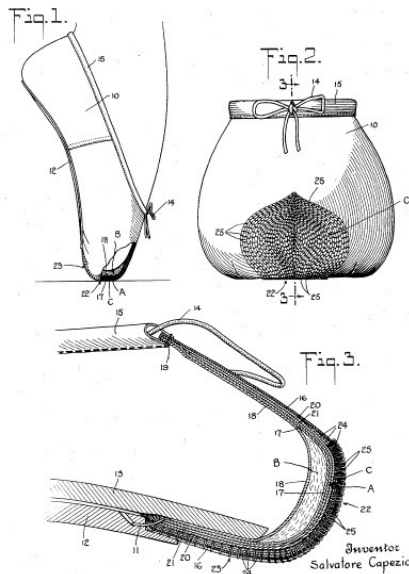
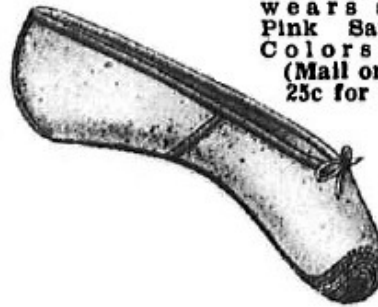


Figure 8: Capezio “Toe and Ballet Slipper.” Patent 1,704,281. Filed October 22, 1927 (Capezio, Patent 1,704,281 A).



PERMASTITCH
Patented under Pat-
ent No. 1,704,281. In-
fringements prose-
cuted. Sensational!
Toe actually out-
wears slipper. In
Pink Satin, \$7.00.
Colors to order.
(Mail orders add
25c for postage).

Figure 9: Capezio ad for the Permastitch shoe, printed in the May 1930 edition of *American Dancer*, page 34.³⁴

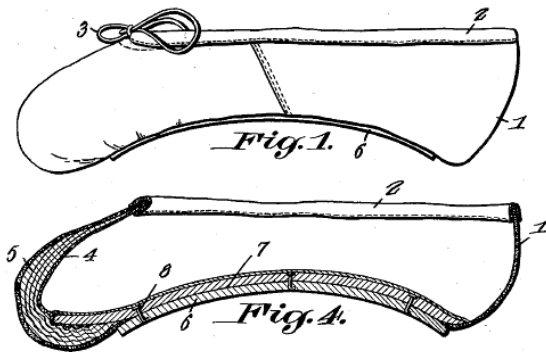


Figure 10: The inside and outside of Barney Bonaventure’s “Toe Slipper,” whose application was filed on April 22, 1924. Patent 1,525,848, same as Fig. 11.



STRONG ARCH TOE SLIPPER

Barney has perfected this su-
perior toe slipper to the degree
where it has received universal
recognition. Unsurpassed support
and comfort, perfect bal-
ance and proper point-
ing of the toes is assured.
Made at our factory by
experts from finest qual-
ity materials.

Pat. No.
1525848

Pink, Black and White
Satin\$5.25
Black Kid 5.00

Figure 11: Barney’s ad for the “Strong Arch Toe Slipper,” printed in the June 1931 edition of *American Dancer*, page 41. Patent 1,525,848, same as Fig. 10.

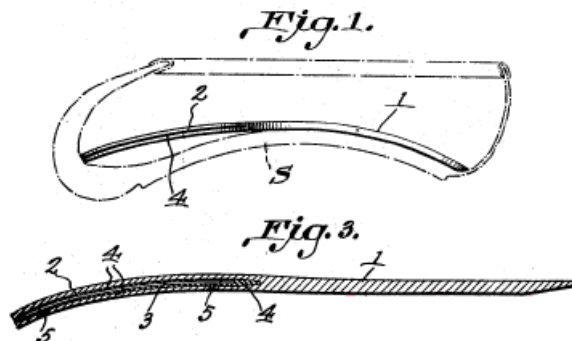


Figure 12: Images of Barney Bonaventure’s springing shank from his “Arch Support” patent application, filed on March 13, 1925. Patent 1,620,797.

³⁴ For price comparison, Capezio point shoes for sale on the Capezio website in March 2012 range from \$63 to \$76 (“Pointe”).

submitted another patent in March 1929 for a toe shoe fitted with a “...molded rubber toe guard” that ran from the top of the box to the heel of the shoe’s sole (Capezio, Patent 1,813,561). In 1930, his newest patent added elkskin to protect the top of the box, while returning to a separate outsole, used to hold his folds or plaits in place (Capezio, Patent 1,872,641 1). The Capezio patent filed in 1931 also uses a box that is highly reinforced (Capezio, Patent 1,891,022 1).

Much like Capezio, another part of the toe shoe many inventors were worried about wearing out was the shank. In 1924, Barney Bonaventure filed a patent for a toe shoe with a shank made of leather, which he believed would provide the stiffness needed for dancing *en pointe* without the use of wood or metal (Bonaventure, “Toe” 1). Without the use of these materials, the shoe would weigh less and would not be too stiff to dance in. The next year, Bonaventure filed an application for what he called “Arch Support” (Fig. 12). Bonaventure inserted a flat steel spring into his pointe shoe in an effort to enable “...even an amateur to stand up on the toes with ease” (Bonaventure, “Arch” 1). He explained:

Thus when the foot of the user is placed in the slipper the arched portion of the device will press against the foot back of the toes toward the arch, thereby supporting the foot and reinforcing it at the point where subjected to the greatest strains while the user is standing on the toes. (Bonaventure, “Arch” 1)

It seemed toe shoe manufacturers were also concerned with the amount of noise their shoe would make. In 1924, Benjamin Goldstein and Salvatore Mastrarrigo filed a patent for a toe shoe that would be much quieter than its predecessors (Goldstein). When speaking about problems with past toe shoe designs, the gentlemen stated, “The

comparatively stiff toe portion causes a very audible and quite undesirable tapping noise when dancing on an uncarpeted floor” (Goldstein 1).³⁵

Making noise was not taboo for the other dance shoe whose many variations and designs were highly patented during this time.

As Fred Kelly, younger brother of Gene Kelly, recalled:

There was only one kind of metal tap in those days. The man who invented them was Haney, who lived in Gary, Indiana. He sold the show *No No Nanette* [1925] on the idea of metal taps. He was the only manufacturer of taps for one year. Well, then the tap business exploded – over a thousand patents! The next year, somebody invented taps that instead of being under the toe of the shoe, extended along under the little toe. And then somebody put lips and clips on, and others came along with a Jingle Tap in which a penny was put inside the tap...And the tap started to become bigger and rounder and terrible. (Frank 175)

In fact, William John Haney lived in the small farm town of North Vernon, Indiana more than 200 miles southeast of Chicago’s neighbor Gary.³⁶ Kelly was correct when he

The Tap King Speaks Hear Yea! Hear Yea!

If its the best you want, then its

Haney’s



J. Francis Haney
(Who Invented the Aluminum Tap)

Box 27, North Vernon, Ind.

Figure 13: Front cover of one of Haney’s sales pamphlets, circa 1930 (*Haney Sales*). From the private collection of Bonita Welch, volunteer at the Jennings County Public Library.

³⁵ For another example of toe shoe from this time period, see Elia Di Rienzo’s “Toe Dancing Slipper,” filed in June 1931.

³⁶ William James Haney went by a variety of names, as seen in Fig. 11, including but not limited to William James, William John, Will John, and J. Francis Haney. His company was known under several variations, like Haney Stage Products Co, Haney Products Co, or simply Haney’s.

named Haney as the originator of the tap shoe.³⁷ Haney himself had theatrical roots. In 1905, he appeared in the center of a picture of the North Vernon Dramatic Club (Jennings 54). On his World War I Draft registration card, Haney wrote that he was a vaudevillian actor in New York.³⁸

Haney filed his patent for a “Clacking Insert for Shoes” on May 26, 1926 (Fig. 14). This insert was only created for the heel of the shoe; after a hole was cut into the heel of one’s shoe, the insert was meant to be nailed into place (Haney, “Clacking” 1). Haney’s invention was made up of metal pieces with a small space in between them that could be filled: “...the noise produced by the device can be regulated by inserting one or more loose members in the device before the same is inserted into the heel of the shoe” (Haney, “Clacking” 1). Less than a year later, Haney filed to patent a “Metal Dancing Shoe Sole,” so that the toe of the shoe would also make noise (Haney, “Metal”). Haney’s metal plate was made of aluminum and was meant to be fastened to the wooden or leather sole of a shoe (Haney, “Metal” 1).

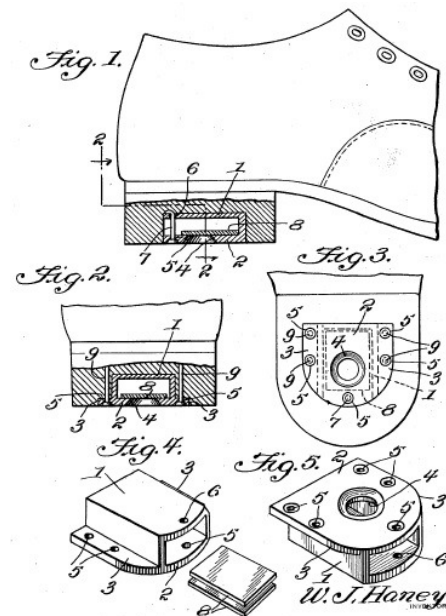


Figure 14: Haney’s “Clacking Insert for Shoes.” Patent 1,668,505. Filed May 26, 1926 (Haney, “Clacking” A).

37 A clipping from North Vernon's Plain Dealer from 1873 announced that John Haney, believed to be William James Haney' uncle, had been engaged to take over the tin shop formerly of Davison and Gardner in Seymour, Indiana, which is approximately 15 miles west of North Vernon (“Untitled”). This could have been the metal source for Haney’s original aluminum taps.

38 On June 5, 1917, two World War I Draft Registration cards were filed under the last name Haney. One was filed in Jennings County, Indiana, stating that Will John Haney, born August 29, 1889, was an actor on the Keith Circuit in New York. The second card, filed in New York, stated that William John Haney, born August 30, 1889, was a vaudevillian actor not currently performing on a circuit.

“Over a thousand patents” might also have been a bit of an exaggeration on Kelly’s part. Many invented uniquely shaped shoe plates to be fastened to pre-existing shoes, following Haney’s example. This included Slothen who filed in 1927, Capezio and Frederick Reynolds who filed in 1930 and 1931, Selva who filed in 1931, and again, Capezio in 1935. Max Gilman’s patent, filed in 1937, was an attachment that could attach to what he called a sandal shoe, and then be removed so that the dancer could use the shoe not only for tapping, but also as an “...usual shoe or a ballet and acrobatic dancing shoe” (Gilman 1). Keeping in mind the fact that these attachments were being invented during the Great Depression, the multi-purposing of the shoe made economic sense.

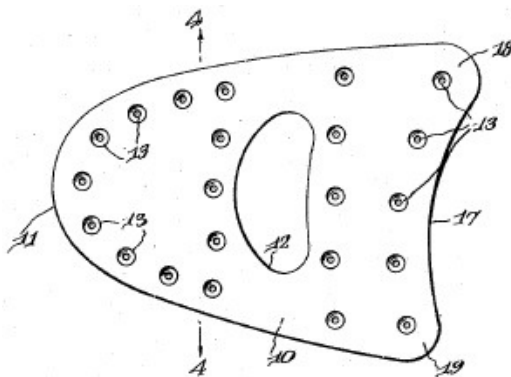


Figure 15: Metal attachment from Sothen’s application for Patent 1,763,543, filed December 17, 1927 (Sothen A).

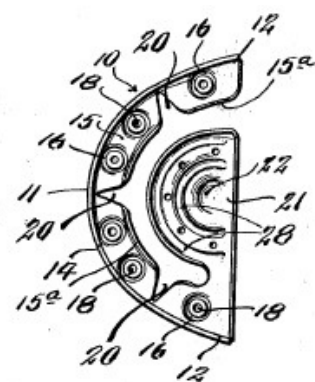


Figure 16: Metal attachment from Reynold’s application for Patent 1,873,328, filed February 20, 1931 (Reynolds, Patent 1,873,328 A).

Some did not create mere attachments that transformed shoes into tap shoes, but instead invented entire shoes produced solely for tap dancing. This included Theodore Arkin and his “Dancing Apparatus,” filed in 1929; this shoe featured tempered steel secured under the ball of the foot and reportedly created sparks when used on an emery mat, “...forming a definite appeal to the eyes of the audience” (Arkin 2). Arkin was followed by Emanuele Landi in 1933 and Clarence Larsen, whose 1935 application came

with improved methods of attaching metal plates to a tap shoe and a heel made out of maple (Larsen 1).³⁹ This metal-on-wood combination would have undoubtedly created a deeper sound not present with previous shoes.⁴⁰

In 1938, Capezio submitted a patent for side taps to be attached to the right and left sides of both the heel and the toe of a tap shoe, possibly for use when tapping against a wall or set of stairs (Capezio, Patent 2,124,908). It seemed taps were being added everywhere inventors could imagine. The 1930s were a time in American history when tap fever was heating to a boiling point. In April 1930, an article was published in the *Los Angeles Times* entitled, “Three R’s Oust Tap Practice: Dancing Shoes Must Stay at Home While Youngsters Attend Classes.” It seemed students were wearing their tap shoes to school in order to perform for their fellows in between classes, scratching the establishment floors and creating headaches for teachers. As a result, tap shoes were banned from schools in Hollywood.⁴¹ Three months later, a follow-up article was published (Mayer, “Tappers”). Columnist Mary Mayer discusses the rampant attack of tapmania, citing causes as being from “talking pictures” or perhaps even from St. Vitus himself. In concluding, she stated:

Tap dancing! Everybody’s doing it. It has actually assumed the proportions of a cure-all. The slim take it up to put on weight. The stout adopt it to take off weight. Tap dancers to the left of us, tap dancers to the right of us – and if they were all placed end to end, the one in front wouldn’t know who to copy! (“Tappers”)

39 For a later version of tap attachment, see Charles Carrara’s “Tap Dancing Heel and Toe Attachment for Shoes” filed in 1939.

40 Shoemakers also were also interested in creating attachments that would produce wood on wood sound, like that of a wooden shoe. See “Cooper’s Wood Clog Tap” for an ad from *American Dancer* in 1930. Haney marketed a maple attachment, “...the first Non-Slip Tap in wood that was ever invented,” in his sales pamphlet.

41 The *Los Angeles Times* article ended with a mention of the excessive number of dance schools in the area: “It is interesting to note that within six blocks Hollywood boasts thirty-two dancing schools.”

Based on this declaration, it could be that although tap dancing was seeing a tremendous increase in popularity, the standard of what was accepted as “tap” might not have been very high. One month later, the *New York Times* published their own commentary on what they labeled tap-crazy America (“Dance Masters”). From the perspective of dance shoe production, the demand for tap shoes had reportedly experienced a 150 percent increase between 1928 and 1930, at the same time when toe-dancing shoes had decreased in demand an estimated 20 percent.⁴² Thomas A. Sheehy, president of the Dancing Masters of America in 1930 believed that based on the current trends, all of America’s population would soon develop into an entire nation of tappers.

Enter Toe-Tap

Haney filed for his third patent on September 22, 1927 (Haney, “Tapper”). This patent was yet another metal shoe attachment, but this time the attachment was for a pointe shoe. The metal attachment plate was to be nailed and sewn into place on the shoe (Fig. 17). Haney wrote:

With this attachment on toe dancing shoes it will be seen that the toe dancer may make taps and the like both while standing on the toes and while standing flat-footed, so that both styles of dancing may be performed with loud tapping and it will also be apparent that the device functions as a protection for shoes. (Haney, “Tapper” 1)

What Haney called a “tapper and protector for toe-dancing shoes” served a dual purpose. With metal added to the box of the toe shoes, the attachment transformed the shoe into a tapping instrument, whether one was dancing flat or *en pointe*. Also, with this invention,

⁴² In an article published in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Thomas Sheehy quipped, “In the last year or two dealers in dancing costumes have found that the demand for ballet slippers has fallen off 33 per cent while the demand for tap shoes has shot ahead 150 per cent” (“Television”). Thus, according to Sheehy’s statistics, demand for toe-dancing shoes had fallen less than the demand for ballet slippers.

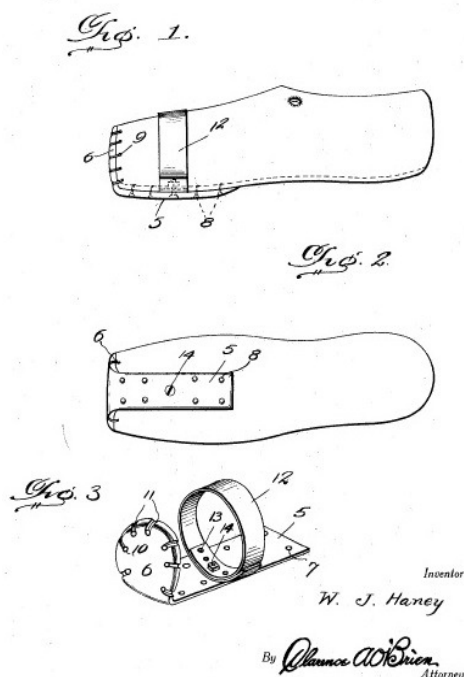


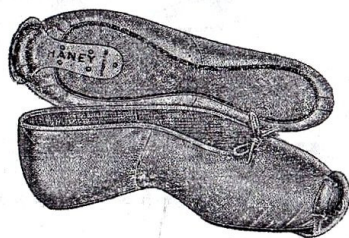
Figure 17: Images from the first application to patent a toe-tap shoe. Patent Re. 17,753 filed by William John Haney on September 22, 1927 (Haney, Tapper A).

Haney Stage Products Co.
NORTH VERNON, INDIANA

First Tap Ever Made. 50c per pair, \$3.50 dozen pairs.
Haney's Patented Ballet Toe Tapper, \$1.75 per pair, \$8.00 dozen pairs.
Haney's Old Time Primrose Jingles (patented) \$1.75 pair, \$8.00 dozen pairs.
Haney's Cuban Heel Jingles for Rhythm Dancing (patent pending) \$1.25 per pair, \$8.00 per dozen pairs.
Haney's Half Heel Rhythm Jingle (patent pending) \$1.25 per pair, \$8.00 per dozen pairs.
Haney's Combination Tapper, full sole, for Professionals (patented) \$1.75 per pair, \$8.00 dozen pairs.
Haney's Cuban Heel and Half Heel Taps, 50c pair, \$3.50 per dozen pairs.
Haney's Aluminum Steel Bar Holders, \$1.50 each.
Haney's Patent Leather, One-Button Dancing Flat for Ladies and Children, with the new floor gripper taps and rhythm jingles. All sizes. Best tap shoe on the market. Price \$5.85 per pair.
Haney's Superior Dance Mats—all sizes and prices. Write for Catalog.
We are the originators of all our products. Beware of imitations.
Watch for Our Hollywood Opening
Meet Us at the New York Convention

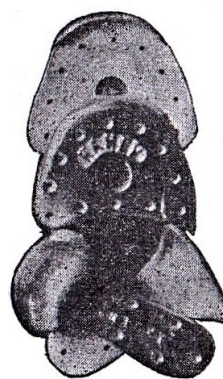
Figure 18: Haney advertisement from *American Dancer*. Printed in the June 1930 edition. Second item listed is "Haney's Patented Ballet Toe Tapper, \$1.75 per pair. \$8.00 dozen pairs."

HANEY'S BALLET TAP DANCING SHOES.



Equipped with the patented Haney Tapper; all colors. Price per pair **\$4.95**

Figure 19: Haney's Ballet Tap Dancing Shoes from one of his sales pamphlets, circa 1930 (*Haney Sales*). From the private collection of Bonita Welch, volunteer at the Jennings County Public Library.



NO. 4. Haney's Wing Tap with flange. 6 sizes.

60c A PAIR.

\$4.00 DOZ. PAIRS.

NO.5. Haney's Ballet Toe Tap, the first tap on the market.

75c A PAIR.

\$6.00 DOZ. PAIRS.

Figure 20: Haney's Ballet Toe Tap attachment from one of his sales pamphlets, circa 1930 (*Haney Sales*). From the private collection of Bonita Welch, volunteer at the Jennings County Public Library.⁴³

⁴³ There were no dates written on this pamphlet, also used in Fig. 13 and 19. In the pamphlet, Haney did mention having "patents," which leads me to believe it was printed after he had more than one, meaning after May 1928. Also, to clarify, after comparing the price of "Haney's Patented Ballet Toe Tapper" in the June 1930 ad from Fig. 16 to the price from Fig. 18, I believe he was selling pairs of attachable toe taps for

manufacturers no longer had to concentrate on reinforcement of the box (Haney, “Tapper” 1). The added metal also prolonged the life of the toe shoe, making toe-tapping an economically practical option.

Toe-tap attachments were more affordable for consumers, allowing them to use their shoes for multiple purposes. Also, since manufacturers did not have to produce entire shoes, these attachments cost shoemakers less money to produce. Haney said his attachment (Fig. 17 and 20) was simple and “... comparatively inexpensive to manufacture...” (Haney, “Tapper” 1). Comparatively, producing his toe-tap attachment (Fig. 17) would cost less than an entire pair of toe-tap shoes (Fig. 19).

The second toe-tap attachment that could also be “...manufactured, installed and sold at a comparatively low price” came from Mary Louise Bunnell of Hagerstown, Indiana (Bunnell 1). Filed on March 15, 1928, Bunnell noted that toe dancers were already creating sounds with their shoes, much like Benjamin Goldstein and Salvatore Mastrarrigo had written (Bunnell 1). Instead of hiding the sound, Bunnell sought to amplify the sound by

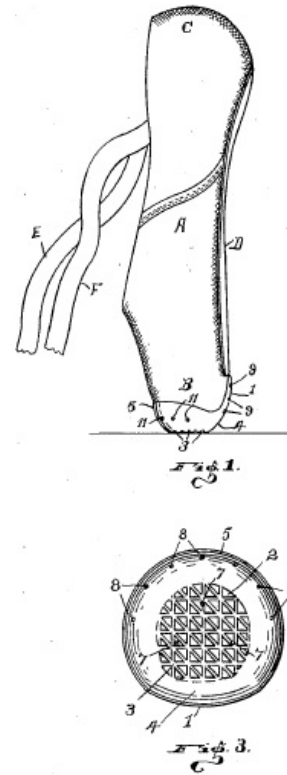


Figure 21: Select images from Bunnell’s Patent 1,717,659. Filed March 15, 1928 (Bunnell A).

nailing a rounded tip made of metal or Bakelite, an early form of plastic, to the box of a pointe shoe (Bunnell 2). Like Haney's shoe, dancers could use this attachment to tap with their feet in either horizontal or vertical positions.

In 1930, Haney applied for yet another, his final, patent (Haney, "Tap"). This time it was a tap that he asserted could be used for both toe shoes and tap shoes (Fig. 22 and 23). For this patent, Haney benefited from what he learned from his past inventions, choosing to fabricate the attachment out of what he vaguely described as "metal or of a suitable metallic alloy" (Haney, "Tap" 1). Haney also added a relatively large hole in the center of his tap, seen in the center of the tap he labeled "Fig. 2."

Haney wrote:

I have learned through experience that the said large aperture 4 in the hard tap of the form described enables the tap to afford a loud ring when the tap is struck against a floor so that the desirable tapping noise is produced with a minimum amount of exertion on the part of the dancer. The said large aperture 4 in the tap is also advantageous because when provided with the aperture, as 4, the tap grips the stage or floor and lessens the liability of the dancer slipping particularly when the dancing is carried on a hardwood floor. (Haney, "Tap" 1)

In attaching this piece of metal to a pointe shoe, there would be no tapping sounds while the dancer was *en pointe*, only when they were on flat. It is for this reason that this

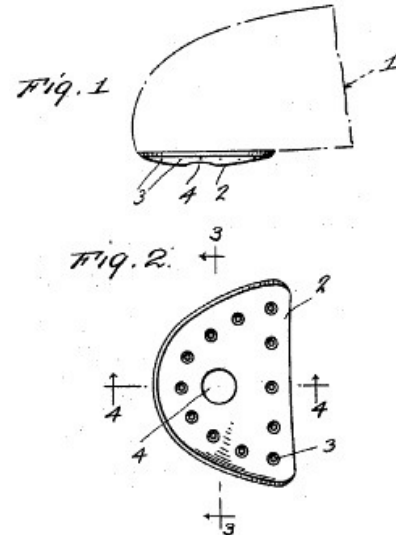


Figure 22: Select images from Haney's Patent 1,780,230 (Serial No. 438,791). Filed March 5, 1930 (Haney, "Tap" A).



Figure 23: Haney ad for "Pat. Ap. No. 438,791," printed in the October 1930 edition of *American Dancer*, page 33.

attachment did not necessarily qualify as a toe-tap. As we will discuss later in this chapter, a true toe-tap dance eventually became characteristically defined as a performance entirely on the toes. Even though this invention was intended by its inventor to be attached to a pointe shoe, one could argue that it was not a toe-tap.

In 1935, Capezio filed his patent for a toe-tap attachment (Capezio, Patent 2,118,835). Capezio saw room for improvement based on the other toe-taps available for purchase. He found the stitching necessary for Haney's first patent to be overly laborious for consumers (Capezio, Patent 2,118,835 1). Capezio also stated that other attachable taps for pointe shoes have "...interfered with proper arching of the foot" (Capezio, Patent 2,118,835 1). With this interference, Capezio noted having seen premature weakening of the shank and uneven bending of the shoe (Capezio, Patent 2,118,835 1). Capezio stated that based on the shapes of other toe-taps, dancers have experienced difficulty in balancing (Capezio, Patent 2,118,835). Finally, Capezio wrote that the sound created by the tap needed to be improved (Capezio, Patent 2,118,835 1).

Capezio's toe-tap was intended to be a relatively permanent addition to the toe shoe to which it was attached (Fig. 24). The tap was to be connected by inserting one long screw through the wall of the shoe and up into

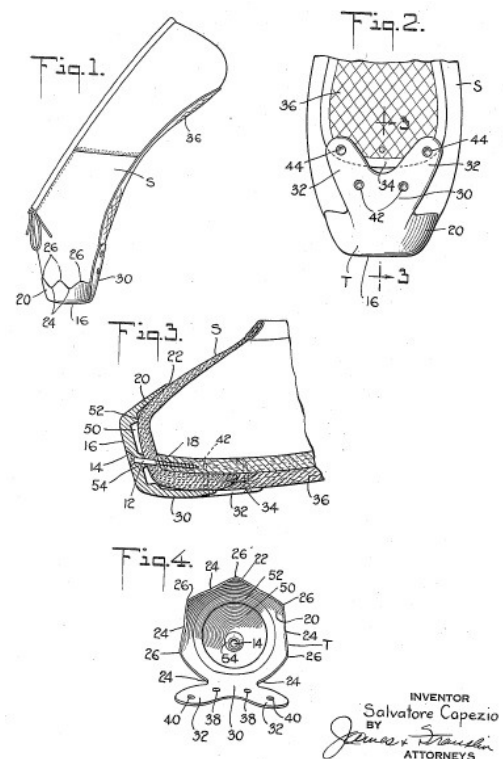


Figure 24: Capezio toe-tap attachment. Patent 2,118,835. Filed April 15, 1935 (Capezio, Patent 2,118,835 A).

the shank. According to Capezio, this screw should have been strong enough to hold the tap in place, although the surrounding nails could and should have been added for additional security (Capezio, Patent 2,118,835 1). The way the metal tap had been shaped into a cup, hollow areas were formed between the box of the shoe and the metal; this space allowed for louder sounds to be created (Capezio, Patent 2,118,835 2). Capezio also believed that his tap's scalloped edge improved the appearance of a toe-tap shoe, "...enhanced by the contrast between the preferably shiny metallic surface of the tap and the colored satin surface of the shoe..." (Capezio, Patent 2,118,835 2).⁴⁴

Much as pointe shoes and tap shoes evolved during this period, the toe-tap itself was in a period of transition. Its invention and subsequent evolution would not have been possible without the contributions of all of its related predecessors.⁴⁵

Technically Speaking, What Is Toe-Tap?

Toe-tap takes its movement vocabulary from the world of tap dance and translates the steps for pointe shoes.⁴⁶ While using the same steps as tap, the one cardinal rule of toe-tap is that the entire dance must be performed *en pointe*. This being the case, toe-tap entirely eliminates the use of the heel, creating all rhythms from a toe stand position. Toe-tap differs from a toe stand because a toe stand is a step, whereas toe-tap is an entire style of dance. A toe stand is a jump that lands on the tip of the toe or toes, balancing on the edge of the shoe before returning to a standing position. This balance can last a short

44 Capezio's rival, James Selva, also sold a toe-tap shoe. Thus far, I have been unable to locate a patent in the United States Patent and Trademark Office for such a patent held by Selva.

45 For later versions of attachments for toe-tap shoes, see Emil Schmalz's "Dancing Shoe" filed in 1935, Carl Schroeder's "Toe Cap for Toe Dancing Shoes" filed in 1938 and Dorothy C. Luhr's "Removable Cover for Toe-Dancing Shoes" filed in 1952.

46 See Appendix A for a glossary of tap terms.

or substantial period, creating a total of two or four sounds depending on if it is a single or double and if the toe stand is syncopated.⁴⁷

While toe-tapping, it is possible to step, stomp, stamp, brush, flap, slap, shuffle, ball change, buffalo, nerve tap, and click the heels together. Regarding heel clicks, without metal attached to the heel of toe-tap shoes, doing so does not produce much noise. With the feet *en pointe*, it becomes more difficult to chug, Cincinnati, drawback, hop, Irish, leap, Maxiford, pick-up, dance various time steps, trench, waltz clog, and perform wings. Without the use of the heel and the feet elevated *en pointe* far from the floor, one is unable to scuff, scuffle, riff, ruffle, dig, paradiddle, bombershay, or perform rolls, cramp or otherwise.

While performing these steps, dancers toe-tap with their knees bent. Loose knees are generally required in tap work as they permit a greater manipulation of sounds, for instance shading of the tap.⁴⁸ Keeping the joints loose grants the dancer the ability to produce a greater quantity of taps. For those whose foot shapes make pointework difficult, bending the knees allows them to place the entire platform of the pointe shoe on the ground; this provides the widest possible, most secure area upon which the dancers can balance their weight. Finally, having the knees at least slightly bent stabilizes the dancer's ankles in an effort to protect them from rolling or twisting.

47 Syncopated: Performing one leg and then the other, which increases the quantity of sounds created. Term can be applied to a variety of steps, including pick-ups and wings.

48 Shading: When a dancer manipulates how the tap hits the floor to create sounds of varying volume and pitch; if we consider the tap shoe to be an instrument, shading is directly related to dynamics.

Foot Placement Comparison

Toe dancers, ballet dancers, and toe-tappers differed from one another based on the aforementioned hierarchy in the dance world. Apart from this divide, there were obvious physical characteristics that distinguished dancers in pointe shoes. Comparing each type of dancer to one another, we see definite differences between weight placement, the line created from the knee to the tip of the toe, and in the presentation of the foot's medial longitudinal arch when in plantar flexion for each category of dancer. These particular images of toe dancers come in a variety of sources. Ranging from 1900 to an example from Ned Wayburn's 1925 book, these dancers all performed either on Broadway or in vaudeville houses. Their costumes were characteristic of toe dancers as they were somewhat gaudy and included skirts that were hemmed at or above the knee. The two dancers from Fig. 25 and 26 came from earlier toe dancing; the women were larger and wore fluffy costumes. The other two figures, from the 1920s, were both smaller and dressed in costumes that were relatively revealing.

Chicot wrote that properly trained toe dancers would strive to create a straight line from the tip of their toes to their knees. He continued, "In toe dancing not only must this position be assumed, but the dancer must be capable of bearing on the point of the toe the entire weight of the body" (Chicot). In attempting to create a straight line from the toe to the knee, the weight placement of toe dancers was forced onto the back part of their shoe's box (Fig. 25-28). This being the case, toe dancers were allowed to bend their knees, for their concern was creating the proper line below the knee, not with the entire leg. Also, toe dancers were not as well trained as ballet dancers at the time. They did not have the strength necessary to stay high in their pointe shoes. Undoubtedly due to their



Figure 25: Mme. Fleurette in "Hoyt's A Trip to Chinatown" from the *St. Paul Globe* on December 23, 1900 ("Mme.").



Figure 26: Image of famed toe dancer Bessie Clayton published in the *Salt Lake Tribune* on January 19, 1913 ("Why").



Figure 27: Miriam Miller appearing in "Midnight Rounders of 1921." Published in the *New York Tribune*, August 21, 1921 ("Miriam").



Figure 28: Marion Chambers published in Wayburn's 1925 *Art of Stage Dancing*, page 74.

Figure 25-28 Select images dancers that have been classified as toe dancers



Figure 29: Adeline Genée in period costume, circa 1900. Image from private collection of Christine Brazzil of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Original source unknown (Photograph).



Figure 30: Vera Fokina posing in her husband's photographic record of "The Dying Swan" (Fokine). Published 1925.



Figure 31: Image from the private collection of Christine Brazzil of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Originally published in the *New York Tribune*, February 8, 1920 ("On Your Toes").⁴⁹

Figures 29-31 Select images of dancers that have been classified as ballet dancers

⁴⁹ The original caption read, "'On your toes girls!' And up they go, all sixteen of them when their dancing master Andreas Pavley ballet master of the Chicago Opera Company gives the command. All of the members of the company's opera corps de ballet and the solo dancers are American girls who have been trained in this unique school of Pavley's out in Chicago" ("On Your Toes").



Figure 32: Dymott shuffling diagonally forward in the 1935 *Taps and Toes* newsreel. Paused at 00:39.



Figure 33: Dymott landing from a hop from the 1935 *Taps and Toes* newsreel. Paused at 00:52.



Figure 34: Dymott shuffling to the side in the 1935 *Taps and Toes* newsreel. Paused at 00:53.



Figure 35: Dymott shuffling to the front in the 1935 *Taps and Toes* newsreel. Paused at 00:54.



Figure 36: Dymott preparing to shuffle in the 1935 *Taps and Toes* newsreel. Paused at 01:24.



Figure 37: Dymott hopping up the stairs in the 1935 *Taps and Toes* newsreel. Paused at 01:25.

Figures 32-37 Select images of toe-tapper Renée Dymott from 1935⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Timing of the newsreel began at 00:00.

lack of training, the arches of toe dancers' feet were not as pronounced.

Such was not the case for ballet dancers (Fig. 29-31). These images of ballet dancers have also been taken from a variety of sources. The best ballet dancers were hired from European ballet training and companies, and therefore I feel it is fair to compare these ballet dancers to toe dancers during this same range of time. Though varied, none of the costumes were overly revealing with all of their skirts hemmed at or below the knee. The women were approximately the same size, though definitely larger than twenty-first century ballet dancers.

According to Willa Cather, "The strength for toe-work comes from the knee and the in-step, but chiefly from the knee. If a girl can make her knee absolutely straight and tense, the instep will usually take care of itself" (90). With the longer skirts, it is much more difficult to imagine the line of the knee, but the straight line of the leg was just barely visible below the line of Vera Fokina's tutu. Thus, a ballet dancer's weight was pushed forward on the box of the shoe, stretching the arch and creating that aesthetically pleasing arched foot line championed by ballet teachers and aficionados. Ballet dancers, who devoted years of training to their craft, benefited from the strength of their foot and leg muscles, allowing the insteps to relax, and subsequently stretch more; this coordination of the legs and feet was mentioned before the turn of the century in the 1886 article that followed the Metropolitan Opera corps dancer ("A Day").

Toe-tapper Renée Dymott's legs and feet were unlike any of the previously mentioned toe and ballet dancers (Taps).⁵¹ Her knees were not merely softened; they were consciously bent as they would have been had she been tapping (Fig. 32-37). Since

51 For another video clip of Dymott toe-tapping, this time with a banjo in hand, see the Pathé Archive's *Renée Dymott* from 1939.

she danced in *plié*, the straight line from toe to knee was not apparent. For the toe-tapper, the weight was placed on the back of the shoe, similar to the other toe dancers. Also, the instep was contracted for ankle stabilization purposes. Her costume did not include a skirt, but instead shorts and a cropped blouse that exposed her midriff.⁵²

Dancer Rochelle Zide-Booth was willing to give a first-hand account of her professional experience of performing toe-tap on stage. As a young girl, Ms. Zide-Booth's mother contacted the famed Harriet Hocter with a request to give her daughter dance lessons.⁵³ In remembering Hocter and her classes, Ms. Zide-Booth clearly stated, "I want you to understand that, as a performer, she [Harriet Hocter] never, to my knowledge, did toe-tap. That was an art left to 'lesser artistes'" (Zide-Booth, "E-mail").

After dancing for the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo, Ms. Zide-Booth became a member of the Joffrey Ballet in the fall of 1958 (Zide-Booth, "Dancing" 49). One year later, Robert Joffrey began rehearsals for a new piece entitled *A la Gershwin*.⁵⁴ According to her journal at the time, upon seeing Ms. Zide-Booth peek into the studio where Joffrey was rehearsing, he decided to add her to a toe-tap number set to *My One and Only* (Zide-Booth, "Dancing" 87).

In an e-mail interview with Ms. Zide-Booth from the fall of 2011, she was asked what she could recall about this toe-tap number from *A la Gershwin*. Ms. Zide-Booth replied:

It was a little trio, synchronized. It traveled from side to side across the stage, 'in one' as the vaudevillians would have called it. The other two dancers were

52 This trend of toe-tappers performing with exposed midriffs will continue in the next chapter.

53 For examples of Hocter's performances on film, see *The Great Ziegfeld* (1936) and *Shall We Dance* (1937).

54 The work has since been retitled "Kaleidoscope." In a letter by Joffrey dancer Dianne Consoer found in Sasha Anawalt's *The Joffrey Ballet*, Consoer stated that the Gershwin number: "...is more musical comedy style" (92), which related directly to Joffrey's choreographic choice of using of toe-tap.

Beatrice Tompkins (of the New York City Ballet) and Mary Ellen Jackson. The arms were very simple, mostly by our sides, and he used me to help the other two with the technique of toe-tapping. We did not, however, wear taps on our pointe shoes. (Zide-Booth, “E-mail”).

This piece of toe-tap resulted from a relatively fast rehearsal process with Joffrey, including a single rehearsal to create the dance and several more to polish the dancing. In performance, the three dancers wore black leotards and short black skirts with pink tights, what they called their “Joffrey uniform.” Their pink pointe shoes did not have taps attached. From Ms. Zide-Booth’s description, Joffrey’s toe-tap is typical of the form. The choreography is limited in the number of directions the dancers were able to move in and the number of steps that dancers could execute. Since the attention was focused on the feet, the arms were not consciously placed.

When describing the difference between dancing *en pointe* and toe-tapping, Ms. Zide-Booth stated that they were opposites: “The ideal is a well-rounded, highly arched foot on pointe. You need even stronger ankles for toe-tap than for classical ballet in order to prevent rolling out (spraining the ankles) or in (shortening the outside tendons)” (Zide-Booth, “E-mail”). Though Ms. Zide-Booth never took a class that specifically taught how to toe-tap, she recalled that an essential lesson learned was: “In order not to roll over and hurt your ankles, you had to ‘pull back’ on your feet, making them look rather ugly on pointe” (Zide-Booth, “E-mail”). Instead of a rounded arch, toe-tap required a contraction of the intrinsic muscles of the foot, allowing for the longitudinal arch to flex. This was the foremost physical challenge faced by all of the brave toe-tap soldiers, balancing *en pointe* while flexing the foot’s longitudinal arch.

Ballet dancers, toe dancers, and toe-tappers were unquestionably divided into three diverse categories of dancers. Nevertheless, the work of all of these dancers in early

twentieth-century America was undeniably facilitated by the inventions of clever theatrical entrepreneurs and shoemakers.

CHAPTER 3 TOE-TAP: THE WHO AND WHERE

Toe-Tap on the Stage

“The boy never practises [sic] toe-work which in a male dancer would be effeminate. His great point must be his elevation the distance which he is able to rise in the air the lightness with which he rises and the number of things he can do with his feet while he is in the air” – Willa Cather 1913 (pg. 90)

In the final paragraphs of his autobiography, *Steps in Time*, famed tapper Fred Astaire stated:

Ballet is the finest training a dancer can get and I had some of it, as a child. But I never cared for it as applied to me. I wanted to do all my dancing my own way, in a sort of outlaw style...I wanted to retain the basic principles of balance and grace but I did not want ballet style to be predominant. (325)

This same renegade spirit was not only present with Astaire and his own career, but also in the hearts of many toe-tappers. Fred Astaire was no toe-tapper, but he did admit to being a toe-walker. When Astaire was very young, he had to wait for his sister Adele to finish her dance lessons. One time, as the story was repeatedly told, he decided to put on a pair of toe shoes: “I had seen other children walk on their toes, so I put on the slippers and walked on my toes. It was as simple as that” (Astaire 11).⁵⁵ According to Lincoln Barnett in a 1941 article published in *Life Magazine*, when Astaire arrived in New York, “...young Fred could already dance expertly on the tips of his toes. He had not yet,

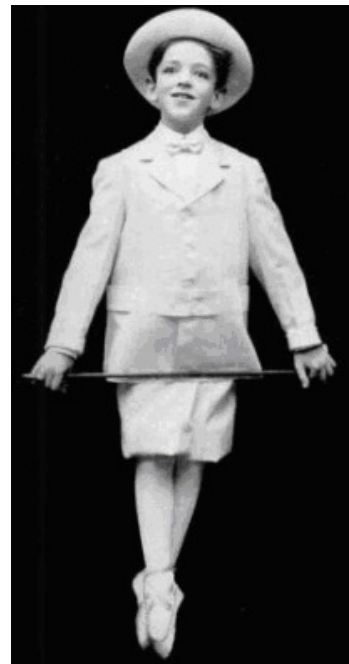


Figure 38: Fred Astaire *en pointe* in 1907 at age 8, as published in *Life Magazine* on August 25, 1941 (Barnett 76).

⁵⁵ Astaire also performed *en pointe* at 5 years old, as evidenced by a photo on the page facing page 84 of *Steps in Time*.

however, learned to make noise with them” (78). Astaire went on to perform *en pointe*, briefly as a student and eventually in the Astaire’s vaudeville act (Fig. 38). Much like the intention behind his first top hat, worn in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, pointe shoes transformed a young Astaire into a taller partner for his older sister (Astaire 20).

Astaire was not the only male dancer in the early twentieth century to don toe shoes. Richard Barstow, whom it has been noted bore a striking resemblance to Astaire, specialized in performing spectacular feats while on his toes both on and off the vaudeville stage (Taylor 42).⁵⁶ As a toe-tapper, Barstow found fame while performing with his sister Edith. Of the two in this sibling act, it was Richard, or Dick as playwright Noël Coward called him, who was the attention seeker (Kline). He was determined to make his name in the theatrical industry by any means necessary. Barstow became known as the “Iron-Toed Boy,” as evidenced by the lengthy two part *New Yorker* profile published in April 1957 by family friend and writer Robert Lewis Taylor.⁵⁷

Ashtabula, Ohio welcomed Barstow and his misshapen left foot into the world on April 1, 1908 (Treaster). At the age of five, Barstow’s mother took him to see an orthopedic surgeon. This doctor, a man by the name of Griener, said, “Now, son, I must tell you the truth. Your foot will be greatly improved, but you may always walk with a limp” (Taylor 44). To this, Barstow replied, “Sir, you are a liar” (44). This doctor’s severe prognosis seemed to be a catalyst for Barstow’s future success. At such a young age, he was determined to overcome his circumstances, motivating him to perform foot

⁵⁶ Taylor’s writing on Barstow was divided into two parts. Unless otherwise noted, all of the in-text citations from Taylor come from the first part, published April 20, 1957.

⁵⁷ *Sarasota Herald Tribune* reporter Helen Griffith announced this publication in her column on April 21, 1957.

strengthening exercises on a daily basis.⁵⁸ Not only did Richard Barstow want to walk like a normal child, he wanted to dance.

The youngest of seven children, three boys and four girls, Barstow's father was killed in a railroad accident (Taylor 42). This left Mrs. Barstow searching for a means to provide for her brood. In moving the family to Seattle, Washington where they were close to relatives, she became a laundress. It wasn't long before the youngest Barstow daughter, Edith, discovered Mme. Leppar's dancing school (Taylor 44). Edith's family was poor and had no money for dancing lessons, so she would stand outside the school's window to watch the classes. On one such occasion, Mme. Leppar went outside to ask Edith what she wanted (Taylor 47). When Edith replied that she wanted to dance, Mme. Leppar invited her into the classroom without asking for payment.

Immediately after her lessons with Mme. Leppar, Edith would rush home to her family, teaching her sisters and brother Dick the new steps (Taylor 47). Seeing the promise her children showed, Mrs. Barstow arranged for her crew, including the 7-year old Dick, to perform on amateur vaudeville stages where the best acts were rewarded with prize money at the end of the night (Treaster). So frequently were the "Five Barstows" winning those contests that Mrs. Barstow soon figured out a way to make the earnings the family's primary source of income:

There were lesser prizes, Mrs. Barstow began thinking, so she split her main force into splinter groups – "The Three Barstows," "Dick and Edith," "Four Tiny Tots," and the like...By working the mathematical law of permutations and combinations, she managed to make a clean sweep on most evenings. 'We were cordially detested by all the other amateurs in Seattle,' Barstow says today. (Taylor 47)

58 Barstow referred to one of these foot exercises as his "footnotes" (Taylor 44). He would grab a writing utensil between his toes and write, scribbling characters just as well with his feet as he did with his hands. He continued to use this method of scripting in his adulthood.

Within a period of about four years, the children outgrew amateur arenas. The Barstow's moved their act to vaudeville, performing on the Junior Orpheum Circuit and eventually touring the country, playing in establishments in Montana, Texas, Oklahoma, Illinois, and Indiana. As they toured, the group's numbers dwindled as Dick's older sisters left the act to start their own families (Taylor 52).⁵⁹

During one stay in Chicago, an eleven year old Dick cracked his shinbone in a car accident (Taylor 54). His doctors recommended immediate surgery, but stubborn Richard Barstow would not allow them to give him any more than a cast, which they recommended he wear for at least a year; these same doctors said he would never dance again. A mere three months later, Barstow decided he didn't need his cast anymore, so he "...got a chisel and a hammer and dissected it" (56). Shortly after that, he and Edith signed a contract at Chicago's Midnight Frolic, a nightclub run by "Mr. Brown," more commonly known as Al Capone (Kline).⁶⁰ While working at the Midnight Frolic and other stages in large cities, the Barstows had to worry about child-labor laws that made it illegal for those under sixteen to work full-time (Taylor 56).⁶¹

What set Richard Barstow apart from the other dancers of this period was his "can-do" attitude and his ability to overcome obstacles. He stated candidly, "What other people did dancing on the sole of their feet I did on my toes" (Taylor 58). And this was

⁵⁹ Barstow's two brothers did not perform with their siblings, preferring to pursue interests outside of show business (Taylor 50).

⁶⁰ A longer excerpt from Robert Taylor's April 20, 1957 *New Yorker* piece on the relationship between Capone and the Barstows read: "Barstow recalls the late thug as a man of exceedingly sweet and gentle disposition – natty, unprofaned, and generous – who referred to them as 'the kids' and fell into the habit of dropping by their hotel and driving them to work. He was frolicsome and enjoyed engaging them in pillow fights, in which they belabored him with murderous zest. Mr. Brown's car was of outstanding interest to the Barstows. It had steel shutters that rolled up, covering the windows – possibly to keep out the sun, they figured. During one ride, the shutters shot up suddenly, and there were several chilling explosions. 'Great heavens! What's that, Mr. Brown?' cried one of the children, and their host replied, 'Somebody shooting rabbits in the park. They oughtn't to let them hunt in the park that way. Somebody might get hurt'"(58).

⁶¹ Working at the Palace Theater in New York at ages 15 and 16, the Barstows were forced to obtain work permits (Smith).

no exaggeration. Barstow became very involved with setting and breaking extreme records, specifically for Ripley's "Believe It or Not."⁶² This included, but was not limited to, balancing *en pointe* on the rim of a Coca-Cola bottle.

Barstow seemed to be caught up in the same the competitive American spirit and love of "15-minutes of fame" that drove the popularity of contests during the 1920s. In 1927, a nineteen-year old Barstow entered one such contest. The editor of a Boston newspaper challenged him to defeat the existing record of toe-walking by going more than two miles *sur les pointes*. After months of training, all the while performing at Boston's Metropolitan Theater, Barstow braved the cobblestones of the old Boston streets (Gerrard). Taylor recounted, "Altogether, he walked four and a half miles, wearing out three pairs of shoes. Concern was expressed at the finish when the new champion, his legs muscles paralyzed by the prolonged strain, was unable to get down off his shoes" (Taylor 41).⁶³ Though worse for the wear, Richard Barstow became the World's Champion Long Distance Toe-Walker (Fig. 39). Newspapers near and far commented on this achievement, including sarcastic remarks like, "A very desirable type of tenant, we should say, for an upper flat" ("Press Comment").

But Barstow's talents reached beyond mere toe-walking. One challenge both he and his partner Edith attempted was toe-tap dancing up and down flights of stairs. According to the *Pointe Book*, toe-tap was a national craze taken-up by amateurs (Barringer 7). The Barstows, who earned professional status at the ages of eleven and twelve, proved that this was not necessarily the case for everyone.

62 Ripley created a series of cartoons representing Barstow. In one such publication, he alleged that Barstow had walked a total of "35,000 miles on his toes," which was a surprise even to Barstow (Taylor 58). However, in a period where any mention in the press was better than no press at all (no matter how truthful that press was), Barstow did not attempt to publicly correct this mistake.

63 The caption for "Photo Standalone 15" stated that Barstow had his toe shoes specially made for him.



Figure 39: Seventeen year old Dick Barstow crossing Boston on his toes.
Published in the *Atlanta Constitution* on Feb 5, 1928 ("Photo Standalone 15").

Two newsreels of the Barstow's work from 1929 and 1932 are stored in the British Pathé archive. Unfortunately, neither clip has sound, but the dancing was spectacular nonetheless.⁶⁴ In the reel from 1929, Dick Barstow began *en pointe* atop a grand piano (Tiptoe).⁶⁵ After a few steps to the edge, he *plié*-ed and jumped off the piano, landing *en pointe* in a parallel *grand plié*.

He took a few hops in this position before running *en pointe* around the stage. He passed Edith, who is balancing in *sous-sus* behind him. As Dick went into a dance resembling Russian kicks, parallel *grand pliés* into *développés à la seconde*, his sister began to *bourrée*. Dick then commenced a series of what modern day hip-hop dance terms “coffee grinders” while still *en pointe*.⁶⁶



Figure 40: Representation of Barstow printed in “Strange as it Seems,” published in the *Washington Post* on December 29, 1930 (Hix).

Coming off *pointe* for the first time in this routine, for his next trick, Dick began in an *élevé* position and took the biggest *plié* imaginable so that his knees were touching the ground. From here, he shifted his weight backward and rolls up to a *relevé* position.

⁶⁴ Unless otherwise noted, every step of each analyzed routine occurs *en pointe*.

⁶⁵ Barstow was known to have jumped off of both upright and grand pianos.

⁶⁶ Coffee grinder: the dancer balances their weight on two hands and one foot. The supporting knee bends completely, while the working leg extends to the side. The working leg moves in a circular path *en dedans* underneath dancer's torso. As the working leg moves forward, each hand lifts up so as to allow the leg to pass underneath it and then is placed on the floor. The dancer shifts their weight onto their hands, during which time the supporting foot is lifted off the floor and the extended working leg passes underneath it. The working leg returns to its extended side position. The step is typically performed multiple times at a rapid tempo. Can also be called a helicopter.

The incomparable Dick had more tricks to share. His wings were enormous; he began in a parallel *grand plié*, and as he brushed to the side, he jumped so that his legs extended to the farthest physical reaches of his body. After warming up his hops *en pointe*, Dick extended his right leg in front of him, deep in *grand plié* on his left leg. From here, he traveled from the piano downstage right to his sister upstage left, hopping only on his left leg. They danced together, this time using steps from ballet vocabulary powered by what appears to be a less than classical intention. He partnered her in a *pirouette*, and together, they went into a sequence of extremely bouncy *jeté battus*. In an assisted *over-the-top*, Edith grabbed a hold of Dick's right foot as his left leg jumped from behind his right leg and landed with the left leg in front. As if abandoning the pretext of ballet altogether, Edith began running backward, kicking her pointe shoes up behind her. Dick was back down in his running *grand plié* chasing his sister. After a few quick edits, the newsreel that displayed the Barstow's steps in slow motion and concluded with the duo as they *trench*-ed off screen, still on their toes.

Some might question that this first newsreel was in fact toe-tap and not simply performing extraordinary steps *en pointe*. Again, without sound on the video, it is difficult to determine the types of rhythms the Barstows created with their feet. In the newsreel from 1932, they shifted their focus to include a greater emphasis on tap dancing (Steel). After Dick jumped off yet another piano, he ran over to a flight of stairs. He ascended and descended the steps in his one-legged *grand plié* position. Joined by Edith, they completed series of shuffles, hops, and scuffs against the stairs. Shuffle-hop-

stepping up the stairs, turning, and then coming down, they found many different patterns to combine these three steps and new ways to ascend and descend.⁶⁷

From the end of the twenties and into the thirties, the Barstow's fame increased. They toured as an act for a total of seventeen years, seven of which were spent at the Palmer House in Chicago (Smith). They played "...virtually every major theater, hotel and night club spot. Edith and Richard probably appeared before more royalty than any other act, according to Richard" ("Edith"). They were wanted for tours in Australia, Europe including Britain, and all across America, from New York to California and everywhere in between, playing all the Keith-Albee circuits (Smith). But circumstances forced the duo to split temporarily. Dick was sent overseas to fight in the Second World War and joined the Army band as a drummer (Treaster). After the war, he choreographed on Broadway and in Hollywood, notably including the production numbers in 1952's *The Greatest Show on Earth* and Judy Garland's iconic 1954 *A Star is Born*.⁶⁸

Richard Barstow found his true calling in a place that required his versatility and eccentricity. Beginning in 1949, he devoted 29 years of his life to directing the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus, using the records he set as a young man as his references (Treaster). For ten of these years, Edith was right by his side, acting as a Ring Director



Figure 41: Richard and Edith Barstow from the *New Yorker's* April 27, 1957 edition (Taylor, "The Evolution of an Iron-Toed Boy – II" 39).

67 Reportedly, it was the Barstows, the "world's greatest toe dancers," who were the originators of toe dancing on a staircase (Smith).

68 Barstow choreographed for Judy Garland on a number of her films, including *A Star is Born*. See "Looking at Hollywood" from 1954.

for the circus. Edith also choreographed for a variety of radio and eventually television programs, including “Garroway At Large,” which was “...considered the birth of staging and choreography on television” (“Edith”). Though toe-tap only comprised part of the act this capable twosome was able to produce, the example they left early on in their careers undeniably spread toe-tap to cities and towns across America and throughout the world.

Toe-Tap on the Silver Screen

Toe-tap would not have blossomed the way it did during the Great Depression if it had remained an era of silent films. Adding sound to moving pictures brought new life to dance, tap in particular, on the big screen. Ballet in this time featured music that drove the choreography, but the shoes were not intended to be heard. Alternatively, the movements of tap did not resound without the accentuating resonance of their accompanying scrapes, brushes, and beats on the floor. During the rise of the “talkie” and the subsequent popularization of the movie musical, new talent was needed and being discovered almost as quickly as the demand emerged. Camera angles magnified feet, making them larger and bringing them closer to audience members than they had ever been before. As far as toe-tap is concerned, early sound pictures captured the dancers in two groups: in the first movie musicals produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and in short films featuring children.

Adding these tap and other sounds to films did not come without problems.⁶⁹

According to film star Bessie Love, star of *The Broadway Melody*:

69 At Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Love recalled using Vitaphone sound: “...at first, which was recorded by a gramophone needle cutting into a large wax disc up in the control room. If you made too sudden or too loud a noise the needle jumped and skipped about, ruining the whole record. The camera was put into a sound-proof booth to eliminate camera noise. Then they got a kind of sleeping garment for it” (111).

Sound was new to all the studios except Warner's. At M.G.M. we would rehearse a dramatic scene and hear the play-back; the sound engineers would say, 'Too much echo' (or not enough something else); and we would vacate the set, which would then be stripped of curtains, furniture, rugs – everything except the walls. Carpenters would swarm on to the set and hammer, hammer, hammer all the floorboards; everything would be replaced on the set, curtains re-hung, thicker carpets laid; we would rehearse again – emotion and all; again hear the play-back, again hear the engineers' 'No!' and again try something different – more curtains, gauze walls. We kept on until it was as near perfect as we could turn it out at that stage, then went on to the next scene. We improved so much as we went along that the end didn't match the beginning" (111).

Published in 1977, *The Book of Tap* stated, "For starters, the first tap dance to music on film was not performed by an old-time hoofer but by an actress, Joan Crawford, in *Hollywood Revue* (1929)" (Ames 52). Crawford did sing and dance "Gotta Feelin' for You" in Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer's *The Hollywood Revue*, which was initially released in June 1929 ("Carroll"). But before this film, M.G.M. released one other musical. *The Broadway Melody* premiered at Grauman's Chinese Theatre on February 1, 1929 (Love 116). In the middle of this film, at the end of a rousing rendition of the title song, there was a short toe-tap number danced by Joyce Murray.

Joyce Murray hailed from picturesque Coeur d'Alene, Idaho (Read). Born in January 1911, she was a relative unknown before her debut in *The Broadway Melody*. In 1927, at the tender age of sixteen, she performed in a Charles B. Dillingham-Gerhold O. Davis production entitled "Sunny," which was essentially a musical comedy version of a circus performed on the Mayan Theater stage in Los Angeles ("Sunny"). According to Bessie Love, Murray had a family connection to *The Broadway Melody*: "Then someone had the bright idea of letting the boys learn the routine first, and practise [sic] throwing around a real acrobat. Which they did – the little ballet dancer, daughter of one of the

electricians, who danced on point in ‘Wedding of the Painted Doll’ in *The Broadway Melody*” (119).⁷⁰

Much like the hierarchy of an opera company, Hollywood in 1929 had its own method of ranking women. One newspaper article from 1929 read:

Those up to five feet tall are called “ponies” and must weigh between 100 and 105 pounds. Next come the dancers, who range from five feet to five feet three inches in height, weighing 110 to 115 pounds. Then we have the medium dancer, height five feet three inches to five or six inches, weight 115 to 120 pounds. Lastly, there’s the showgirl, who ranges from five feet five inches in height to five feet seven inches in height, her weight between 120 and 130 pounds. (“An Audible”)

Joyce Murray, who measured 5’2” would have qualified as one of the smallest classes of dancers (“Height”). Her petite figure was undoubtedly an asset to her as she worked toward mastering the craft of tapping on her toes.

The Broadway Melody (1929) was the first American musical and the second film to win an Academy Award for Best Picture. This all talking, all singing, all dancing movie featured a backstage love story housed within the opening of a Broadway show. Midway through the film, during the final dress rehearsal of Zanfield’s Revue, leading man Charles King belted out the title “Broadway Melody” in his finest top hat and tails. Behind him, a chorus line of women of varying sizes grapevined and kicked their way across the stage. He eventually joined them in a single-double buck, or stomp, time step where the camera curiously zoomed-in on the upper half of his body. As the chorus line went into a series of high-kicks, King walked stage right and retrieved Joyce Murray.

Film historian Richard Barrios devoted an entire four sentences to Murray’s performance, more than many other writers have done. He wrote:

70 Murray did dance in the “Wedding of the Painted Doll” number, but she did not toe-tap. As the quote stated, she was basically lifted and thrown from partner to partner.

... for all the staginess does force itself into a more cinematic mien when soloist Joyce Murray begins a tap dance on pointe. The movie audience is given a perspective not possible in the theater: interspersed with the medium and long shot are three close-ups of the tapping feet. While ballet-tap was common in twenties shoe dancing, no audience had been this close to it, hearing the taps register clearly and seeing the feet from inches away. That it looks excruciatingly painful is further testimony to film's ability to alter the most familiar theatrical rites. (70)

After a graceful three-step turn, Murray walked to center stage, where she hopped onto her pointe shoes.⁷¹ These shoes were black with thick black ribbons tied tightly around her Achilles tendons; they were bejeweled, adding visual interest. The shoe's vamp was tapered, leaving a smaller platform on which to balance. It is difficult to determine what shape of metal has been attached to the bottom of Murray's shoe, but when she brushed her leg forward, a shiny material was present (Fig. 43). For a good portion of this excerpt, the camera angle cut off the bottom of Murray's feet, specifically when she turned around. This made it difficult to know if the metal was nailed only to the tip of the shoe's box or if it extended up behind her toes. In any case, Murray's taps were very light and clear throughout this routine. The sound her foot produced was like that of a soft-shoe; this could have been dubbed in postproduction (Ames 55).⁷²

Murray's solo was performed entirely *en pointe* and with her legs almost continuously in parallel. This meant that all actions of the legs and consequently the strikes of the tap occurred in the sagittal and vertical planes. Throughout the dance, her supporting leg was almost never straight. Most of the camerawork focused on Murray's

71 For a full choreographic analysis of the toe-tap from the *Broadway Melody*, see Appendix B.

72 Reviewing the choreography frame by frame while creating Appendix B, there were a few discrepancies between the sounds heard and Murray's movements. For instance, at the end of the first measure, 9 seconds into the dance, it sounded like she performed a shuffle. Although Murray brushed her foot out, when she brought it back in, the foot did not touch the floor. Also, in her sequence of shuffle-hops, the sounds did not always match up with the foot movements. Inconsistencies like this led me to believe that the sound for this particular toe-tap routine was dubbed.



Figure 42: Joyce Murray performing a hop-shuffle in *The Broadway Melody* (1929). Paused at 00:07.



Figure 43: Joyce Murray performing a cross-over shuffle. Paused at 00:08.



Figure 44: Joyce Murray's syncopated wing in action. Paused at 00:41.



Figure 45: Joyce Murray's upper body during the syncopated wings, displaying her bat costume and cap. Paused at 00:48.



Figure 46: Joyce Murray performing her series of continuous side shuffles. The right foot moved so fast it was difficult to find a moment when it wasn't blurry. Paused at 01:02.



Figure 47: Joyce Murray hopping on one foot. Note the bottom of the foot *en pointe* is not in the shot. Paused at 01:09.

Figures 42-47 Select images extracted from *The Broadway Melody* (1929)⁷³

⁷³ Timing of this film clip commenced with Murray's entrance from stage right as 00:00.

feet, occasionally displaying the upper half of her body; her arms were not particularly placed, but instead were extended and thrown around in what appeared to be a masked attempt to help her remain on balance. Murray seemed to be a master of performing small hops *en pointe*; her supporting foot left the floor very minimally while her working foot was shuffling, brushing, lifting to *retiré*, or simply tapping (Fig. 42). To do this, she maintained a small *plié* in her supporting leg and pushed off to leave the floor only enough to create a tapping sound when landing. At the end of her solo, Murray performed a fifteen-second series of quick shuffles in which her right foot completed side shuffles while she continuously jumped on her left leg. As she did so, her supporting foot moved only the slightest amount.

For this number, Murray was costumed in an adorned black bikini, her midriff exposed. There was a large amount of fabric tied into a bow that had been attached to her right hip and neck. Her costume prominently displayed white bats, two on her chest, then two more on her left hip opposite the bow. Her head fashioned a black cap with white ears attached, perhaps intended to be those of a bat. None of the chorus girls behind her wore bat outfits. None of the song lyrics referenced bats. The choice of the bat motif was puzzling.

When Murray performed a step resembling a syncopated wing, it appeared as if her upper body intended to fly (Fig. 45), so perhaps this was part of the reason M.G.M. and Sammy Lee chose to costume her in such a literal way. For these wings, however, she did not jump as before. Her right foot shuffled and performed a small pick-up before she repeated this step to the other side (Fig. 44). Thus, she created all the sounds of a syncopated wing without having to scrape the side of her foot against the floor. In

performing the wing in this way, her ankle was more stable on her shoe, as a full jump would have been riskier *en pointe*. Murray's solo finished fittingly with a campy, yet triumphant cartwheel where she was safely able to come down from pointe.

Sammy Lee, who choreographed Murray's dances for both *The Broadway Melody* and *The Hollywood Revue of 1929*, did a commendable job with this particular choreography. Murray's performance was confident and complex, as she looked the part of a complete professional. Not once do either of her ankles twist or appear unstable. The choreography seemed to come almost naturally to her, or at least as natural as kicking and hopping *sur les pointes des pieds* can be. An excerpt from "Sammy Lee: The Hollywood Career" read: "The filming is very primitive, but enables us to see the typical Lee characteristics in this number: toe tapping, parallel lines of chorus girls, and the hop exit [for the chorus girls]" (Ries 145).

After *The Broadway Melody*, Murray went on to dance in the *Hollywood Revue of 1929*.⁷⁴ Unlike *The Broadway Melody*, this film was not a backstage story, but instead a musical variety show of stage and film acts. Conrad Nagel and Jack Benny acted as Master of Ceremonies for this film, which was said to be host to the largest cast ever assembled for a film. It included a chorus of seventy-two dancers ("An Audible"). In reference to *The Hollywood Revue of 1929*, Barrios did not dwell on Murray's participation; he simply quipped, "...the snazzy 'Low Down Rhythm' makes use of two *Broadway Melody* retreads – another ballet-tap specialty by Joyce Murray and Bessie Love's old costume, now worn by singer June Purcell" (162).

74 Announced on May 5, 1929 under the title *M-G-M Revue of Revues* in "An Audible Screen Revue with a Cast of Notables." Announced on May 19, 1929 under the title *Hollywood Follies* in Hubbard Heavy's "Screen Life in Hollywood."

Murray was costumed in a black and white tutu and bra, midriff fully exposed. Like the twenty-four chorus dancers behind her, she wore a black top hat. As in *The Broadway Melody*, the camera shot cut off the bottom of Murray's feet for a good portion of her dance. She wore black pointe shoes with metal attachments on the bottom. In this recording, however, the sounds of her taps were oddly missing.

Lee's choreography for *Hollywood Revue* was not as complex as in *The Broadway Melody*.⁷⁵ To begin Murray's solo, she ran into the camera shot on her pointe shoes. She took many steps in place and twisted her hips from right to left, her focus toward the floor. The routine was primarily composed of walking and kicks, including pendulum kicks similar to those performed by Bessie Clayton many years before. Murray kicked forward and backward, constantly changing her body facing as she jumped in a circle. For the bulk of these kicks, she did not point her working foot (Fig. 49-52).

Once Purcell finished her song, Murray and the chorus dancers behind her commenced a tap section danced in unison. Together, they repeated the phrase "stomp hop step step," all the while changing directions. Most of the unison choreography was, in fact, walking steps in place. The chorus dancers took their hats off their heads and twirled them on their canes while Murray embarked on another sequence of kicks. These kicks led into "step taps" for Murray's exit stage right.

The fact that the choreography for *Hollywood Revue* was drastically simplified was almost an insult to Murray. With the tight production schedule, Lee did not have much time to set the choreography on the dancers.⁷⁶ Conceivably, the background

⁷⁵ For a full choreographic analysis of the toe-tap from the *Hollywood Revue of 1929*, see Appendix C.

⁷⁶ We can conclude that the production schedule was tight because *Hollywood Revue* was released only four months, nineteen days after *Broadway Melody* in a time where M.G.M. was desperate to release talking pictures as fast as they possibly could, especially ones like this one that featured so many of its star



Figure 48: Joyce Murray twisting from right to left in *Hollywood Revue of 1929*. Paused at 00:15. Note the bottom of the feet are not in the shot.



Figure 49: Joyce Murray kicking forward. Paused at 00:19. Note the bottom of the foot *en pointe* is not in the shot.



Figure 50: Joyce Murray kicking forward. Paused at 00:21. Note the bottom of the foot *en pointe* is not in the shot.



Figure 51: Wide shot of Joyce Murray in *Hollywood Revue of 1929* kicking forward. Paused at 00:32.



Figure 52: Wide shot of Joyce Murray kicking backward. Paused at 00:36.



Figure 53: Joyce Murray hopping backward, legs open as the chorus behind her twirls their hats on their canes. Paused at 01:01.

Figures 48-53 Select images extracted from *The Hollywood Revue of 1929*⁷⁷

performers.

⁷⁷ Timing of this film clip commenced with Murray's entrance from stage right as 00:00.

dancers might not have been highly trained. Perhaps Lee was focused on other projects at the time, making this minute of dancing not a high priority. There could have been other reasons why a piece intended to showcase this solo dancer did not fulfill its task. The film clip we have been left with showcases Murray on stage in a revealing costume, featuring a tutu that was obviously inappropriate for the setting. Lee instructed her to step in place and kick her legs; this made a mockery of the dance form of toe-tap at the same time that it ignored what this talented individual was undeniably capable of achieving. It is fortunate that the film clip from *The Broadway Melody* exists to demonstrate Joyce Murray's unique style and ability.

Little was heard from Murray after she appeared in these films. In December 1929, St. Petersburg, Florida's *Independent* newspaper announced she would be playing the role of a Spanish senorita in *The House of Troy* starring Ramon Novarro ("Theater"). This film was released under the title *In Gay Madrid* in 1930. As buzz from *The Broadway Melody* and *The Hollywood Revue of 1929* died down, Joyce receded from the spotlight. From time to time she did appear around Hollywood.⁷⁸ She performed in smaller scale



Figure 54: "Movie Fashions" published in the *Schenectady Gazette* on July 26, 1929.

⁷⁸ For an image of Joyce Murray appearing as a chorus girl at the Warner Brothers' Earle Theater, see "Miss Hepburn and Dennis Hoey, of 'Jane Eyre,' are Honor Guests at Afternoon Rout at the Willard" from the *Washington Post* on March 24, 1937.

productions including the Roosevelt Hotel's posh Blossom Room ("Display Ad 20").⁷⁹

According to the *Milwaukee Sentinel* on November 30, 1930, Murray reportedly danced continuously *en pointe* for a period of 78 minutes, setting the world record for this impressive feat ("Untitled"). Hearing of Murray's accomplishment, another ballet dancer, Viennese Mlle. Floris, bested Murray's record by dancing for 182 minutes. The article mentioned that the shoes for both record holders had been "...strengthened by stiff wooden toe-caps." Much like Barstow, Murray's record setting garnered her public attention for completing such an impressive feat.

After this press mention, Murray disappeared from the public spotlight. In January 1944, Louella O. Parsons, gossip columnist for the *Atlanta Constitution*, printed one sentence regarding Murray's whereabouts: "Johnny James, who plays in 'Gung Ho' [drama film produced by Universal Pictures], has secretly been married to Joyce Murray, M.-G.-M. dancer, for weeks" (Parsons). After that, Joyce Murray, one of the most proficient toe-tap dancers from this time period, retired from public life.

Toe-Tapping Tots

"Or perhaps since toe-tap recitals are as noisy as they are vigorous, the taps, which would disguise the noise of moving feet and creaking bones, were there to distract audiences and dancers alike from the painful reality of being *en pointe*, which is not unlike that of running in five-inch heels." – Linda Brodkey (Schmidt 81)

In *The Art of Stage Dancing*, Ned Wayburn devoted an entire chapter to dancing children, sharing his many years of experience working with youthful novices. In this

79 According to this ad, Murray performed alongside "Gus Edwards' Hollywood Protegees," some of whom we will encounter later on in this chapter. When speaking about "revues," Edwards, who also performed in the *Hollywood Revue of 1929*, said, "But, of course, such shows could only be shown in the biggest cities. When the studio began developing the revue in talking-picture form, it made a big difference" ("Musical Show").

chapter, he also addressed concerns about putting children up on pointe before their legs, ankles, and feet were ready. Wayburn stated:

One thing we are very careful and considerate about is, putting a child on her toes in the ballet work. We find cases where teachers elsewhere have forced this too soon, before the child's feet and ankles were prepared for it. Mothers are sometimes to blame for that, for they are eager to see their little daughters do this pretty work; but we insist upon proper foundation work first, developing the child gradually, and then, when the strength is there, we know we should be able to do the rest not only without danger of permanent injury but with assurance of pleasing and perfect success. (257)

The 1930s saw a tremendous rise in children's interest in dance and its many forms, whether acrobatic, exhibition, specialty, ballet or tap. As early as 1930, instructor Ethel Meglin commented on the trend, saying, "The tap and acrobatic fever, however, is dying out, making way for a new study of the ballet" (Meglin in Mayer, "Dancing").

Ethel Meglin devoted almost four decades of her life to mentoring children in the entertainment field. From the time she opened her first Los Angeles studio in 1926 until her retirement in 1962, her schools provided training in the basics of voice, theater, and dance for countless children.

Meglin, formerly called Moegling, was one of four daughters of famed minstrel

man, Conrad Redman ("Meglins Open"). In New York City, where she was raised, Meglin performed not only in her father's revue, but also as a dancer for Florenz



Figure 55: Ethel Meglin as published in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1934 for announcement of her Kiddies' "Three Little Pigs" ballet ("Photo Standalone 8").

Ziegfeld. It was during this time that she began teaching dance, instructing society children how to dance and conduct themselves properly at social gatherings.

When Meglin moved to the west coast, she decided to become a dancing teacher. Though her school started in 1926 in a single room with only a handful of students, this was not always the case (“Meglins Open”).⁸⁰ To increase student enrollment, Meglin

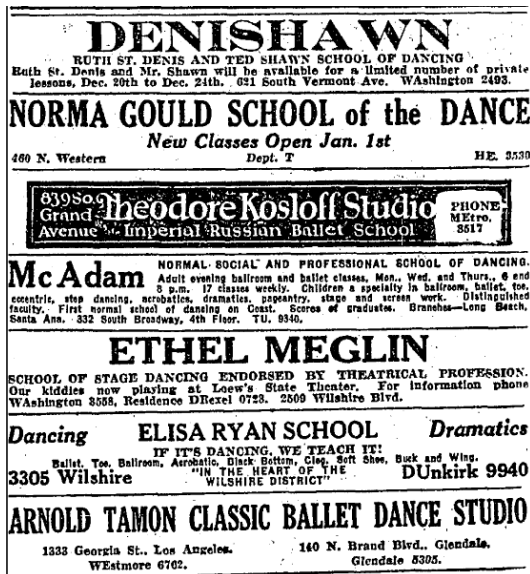


Figure 56: Advertisements for “Dancing Schools” from the *Los Angeles Times* as published on January 2, 1927 (“Display Ad 74”).

advertised regularly in the *Los Angeles Times* (Fig. 56 provides one example) and encouraged her students to bring their siblings to class with them.⁸¹ By 1929, school enrollment had reached more than 100, as evidenced by a newspaper clipping promoting a performance at Loew’s State Theater (“Meglin Kiddies Will”). The student population increased at an aggressive rate. In 1930, one-hundred and

fifty Kiddies, ages three to twelve, performed at the Hollywood Pantages Theater (“Troupe”).

Ned Wayburn believed that eight years old was a good age for children to begin dancing, “...for then the young pupil has a mind sufficiently developed to easily comprehend instruction, and a body readily responsive to training” (255). In 1930, *Los*

80 Meglin’s obituary from the *Los Angeles Times* estimated that her first classes catered to as many as thirty pupils: “She started teaching with about 30 kids and was looking around for a show to put them in. A producer was interested but wanted 100 kids. So she had her 30 bring in brothers and sisters and that’s how it started” (Folkart).

81 In its history, the schools run by Ethel Meglin held a variety of names, including Meglin Professional Children’s School, the Meglin Dance Studio, Meglin’s Dance School and Meglin’s Wondrous Hollywood Kiddies.

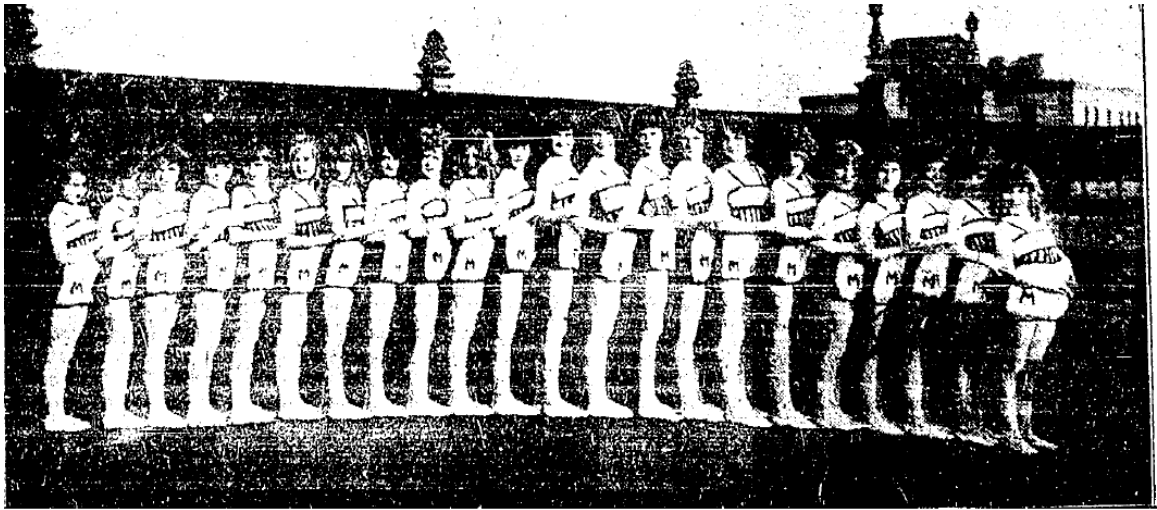
Angeles Times reporter Mary Mayer explained, “It is no novelty for schools in and about Los Angeles and Hollywood to have enrolled among their students youngsters whose ages range from two to three and one-half” (Mayer, “Dancing”). At this time, the age range of the Meglin Kiddies extended from two and a half to twelve years of age (“Meglins Open”). There were several reasons why Meglin accepted her students at such young ages; she might have been tempted by the tuition money, or the challenge of training novelty acts, or perhaps it was the pressure of demand from parents and producers.

In the summer of 1930, Ethel Meglin built a new studio. In addition to her original school on Venice Boulevard, she opened a second school across Los Angeles on Whittier Boulevard. In January 1931, it seemed that the Meglin studios could not keep up with the overwhelming demand they faced:

When Ethel Meglin built her new studio six months ago, she thought it would be large enough, but the growth of the school in the past six months has been so great that it has been necessary for her to open branches in Hollywood, Glendale, and in the southwest at Figueroa and Manchester. Within the next few months more branches are to be opened.⁸² (“Children Score”)

Even with the additional space, the Meglin schools were inundated with constant pressure to serve an overwhelming number of students. Continuing with the school’s growing trend, during the holiday season of 1930, it was reported that, “...500 Meglin Kiddies appeared in revues and individually throughout California. In addition to appearing at the Pantages and Loew’s State the children were seen at the Shrine, Breakfast and many

⁸² An ad published in August 1931 names all four studio locations, announcing a new fall schedule of classes starting in September (“Display Ad 73”). These studios accepted ages 3 to 15 and also offered adult classes.



Ethel Meglin's Kiddies—Shrine.

Figure 57: Photo accompanying a preview taken from the *Los Angeles Times*, as published on May 7, 1927. Twenty-two Meglin Kiddies performed at Shrine Auditorium for a benefit at for victims of the Mississippi flood (“Unusual”).

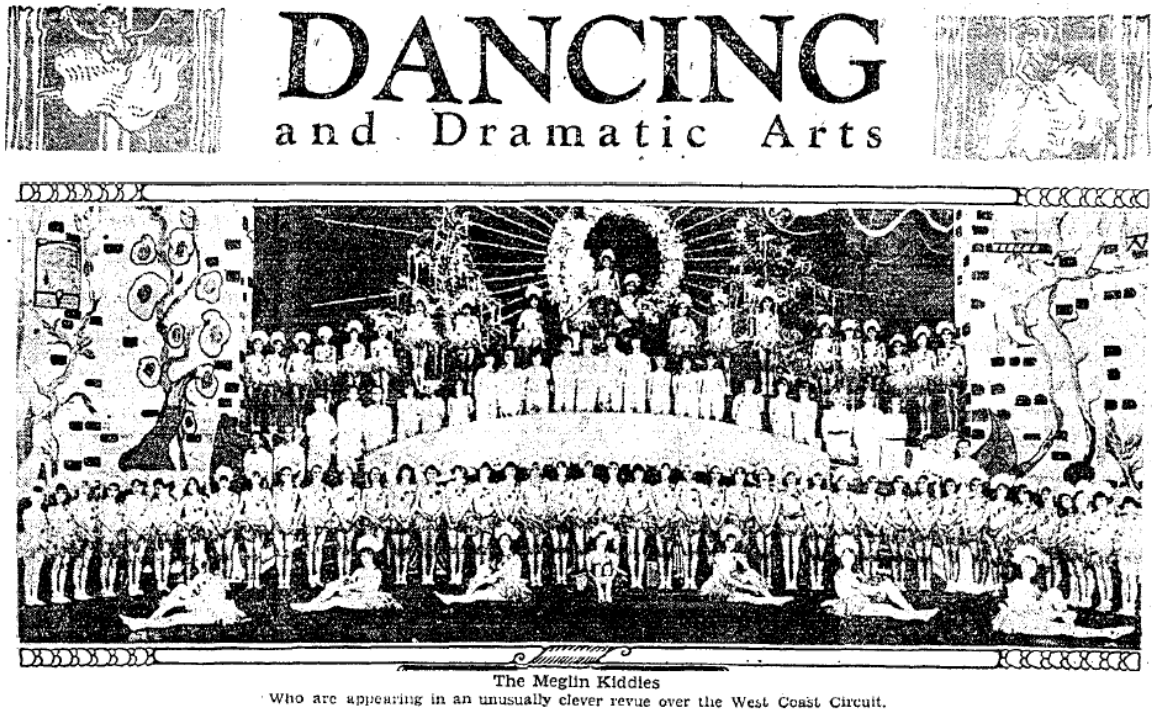


Figure 58: The header of the Dancing and Dramatic Arts section of the *Los Angeles Times* on September 7, 1930, featuring ninety-six Meglin Kiddies (“Dancing and Dramatic Arts” B13).

other club and charity affairs” (“Dancer Wins”).⁸³

The following year, 1931, a cast of five hundred Meglin Kiddies appeared in “The Three Little Pigs,” their largest assembly at that time (“Disney”). With such overwhelming numbers of children, how could Meglin have kept a high quality of instruction for each individual child? Very simply, she could not and did not. Look at the difference between Fig. 56 and Fig. 58. Fig. 56 is from 1927, displaying twenty-two children, while Fig. 58 is from a mere three years later, displaying ninety-six kiddies. In an extremely brief period, the school grew tremendously from a small establishment to the home of lavish production numbers. Along with studying drama, voice, and dance, the Meglin children learned how to perform, which they did often. It seemed all schools in Hollywood came with a performing troupe. In *Where She Danced*, Elizabeth Kendall stated:

“Terpsichore is becoming the patron saint of Los Angeles,” said the Los Angeles *Examiner* as early as 1917, citing five big California dance acts in vaudeville, all but one on the top Orpheum circuit: Theodore Kosloff’s school had produced a troupe; a former teacher of gym and aesthetic drills had started the Marian Morgan dancers; another aesthetic type named Helen Moeller directed an act; Brother St. Denis (who had helped manage his sister) had split from her and Shawn with *his* group of “Denishawn Dancers” in addition to the regular, very popular Denishawn Dancers of Denishawn. The companies were made of students just barely turned professional, so quickly had the demand arisen for this kind of dancing (154).

Ethel Meglin aimed to give her students as many performance opportunities on stage, screen, and radio as she could (“Film Feature”). In 1930, for example, the youngsters appeared in films for Fox, Warner Brothers, First National, Pathé, Tiffany, Mack Sennett, and Tee-Art (“Meglins Open”). The Meglin Kiddies also acted on weekly

83 An article published two weeks later (January 25, 1931) stated, “This year at Christmas time there were more than 600 pupils of the school appearing on the stage of Fox Theaters, Pantages Hollywood, Loew’s State, Colorado in Pasadena, Manchester, and Balboa” (“Children Score”). There was no explanation as to why one article cites 500 and the other 600.

radio broadcasts and made phonograph records. A snapshot from August 1934 exhibited how extensively the Meglin Kiddies were distributed throughout Hollywood : 70 children were working on Warner's series of Technicolor shorts, a total of 40 in several Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer projects, 15 at Fox Hollywood studios, and 34 working with George White on a film version of the "George White Scandals" ("Meglin Kiddies in Film").

In 1936, the Meglin schools combined with the Fanchon and Marco dancing studios, a relationship Meglin had forged early on after moving to Los Angeles. Together, these companies comprised, "A total of 137 schools in key cities throughout the country are affected by the consolidation, with a student enrollment of more than 100,000" ("Famous Dance"). As a result of this merger, Meglin became the largest dance school in the United States, an extraordinary accomplishment given the economic state of the country during the Great Depression.

The success of the Meglin Dance Schools continued well after the 1930s. In 1939, Ethel Meglin looked through her records and found that in the eight months from the beginning of that year until August, "...more than 900 Famous Meglin Kiddies received motion-picture calls from major studios, and during that same period more than 1000 Meglin students were also given parts in stage and radio productions. From this unusual activity, many of the students received contracts" ("Placement Record"). It was rare at this time for women to be entrepreneurs, as most were relegated to wife and motherly duties. Meglin, however, was an exception to this trend with her undeniably successful dance school empire. While she had great business acumen, the results of her teaching methods produced dancers of poor technique.

With such emphasis on public performances and job placement, was the Meglin Dance Studio a school or a talent agency? Former Meglin Kiddie June Lang spoke positively of her time at Meglin. She stated of the experience: “It gave them the incentive to continue on and decide whether they wanted to be an actor, actress or dancer. It gave them an interest in pursuing a career in the theatrical world” (Folkart). And indeed, the careers of many notable stars of the day, including Judy Garland, Mickey Rooney, Ann Miller, Gwen Verdon, Jane Withers and Shirley Temple, began as they took the stage among their peers in Meglin’s Kiddie Revues (“Child Training”).



Figure 59: Wonder kiddie Carolyn Dine as published in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1927 (“First Photos”).

It seemed technique was really not an essential goal for the Meglins. Fig. 59 is a photo extracted from a group of images entitled, “First Photos Showing American Naval Forces in Charge in Nicaragua,” published in 1927. It is difficult to determine what type of toe shoes Wonder Kiddie Carolyn Dine was wearing. She wore socks underneath the unhidden toe shoe ribbons that had been tied tightly into knots, not bows, in

front of her ankles. Her knees were not completely straight with both legs essentially in parallel, not actively rotated outward. Her weight appeared to be collapsing into the shoe, rather than being supported through her leg, back, and abdominal muscles. Also, because these muscles were not engaged, she was able to tilt her pelvis, open her ribs, and sway in her lower back. The working foot in arabesque was sickled, not fully stretched.

If the primary concern of the Meglin Dance School was producing performers with quality ballet technique, this picture would not have been taken as it was, nor would it have been published for such a wide audience. The photograph was solid proof that the Meglin school was more interested in publicity than technique. The novelty of having a young girl pose impressively on one foot seemed to have been more important than having her perform an arabesque correctly. Clearly, the main goal for the Meglins was not producing young dancers with strong technique.

In 1929, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer released a Vitaphone Varieties short entitled *Bubbles* (Meet Me). This piece featured the Meglin Kiddies performing an assortment of songs and dances. Following the Gumm Sisters, which incidentally featured an eight-year old Judy Garland, a group of nine women shuffle-hop-flap-ball-changed their way downstage *en pointe*. The dancers were dressed in white and black costumes that resembled band uniforms with tutus attached. As if staying atop their toes were not difficult enough, they were dancing with extra fabric tied around their wrists and a foot-tall feathered hat which appeared to be strapped tightly under their chins. The ends of their shoe ribbons were tied into bows in front of each ankle, not tucked away from view (Fig. 61 and 62).⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Tying the ribbons of pointe shoes into bows at the top of the ankle seemed to be a trend in California toe dancing, perhaps for ornamentation purposes. See “Display Ad 56 -- No Title” for College Boot Shops



Figure 60: Close-up shot from the Meglin Kiddies' *Bubbles*. The far right ankle temporarily twists to the right. Paused at 03:43.



Figure 61: Meglin point shoes. Paused at 03:40.



Figure 62: Meglin point shoes. Paused at 03:49.



Figure 63: Meglin dancer rolling inwards to stay on point shoe while shuffling. Paused at 03:44.



Figure 64: Meglin Kiddies attempting wings. Paused at 03:54.



Figure 65: Wing landings. Note the variation in angles of the knees and feet. Paused at 03:57.



Figure 66: The Meglin group's final *sous-sus* with individual interpretations. Paused at 04:28.

Figures 60-66 Select images extracted from the Meglin's *Bubbles* (1929)⁸⁵

published on page B14 of the *Los Angeles Times* on June 15, 1930. Also, in Frank Capra's 1938 *You Can't Take it With You*, Ann Miller tied her ribbons in front of her ankles (*You Can't*). Miller was playing the part of Essie, the amateur toe dancer.

⁸⁵ Timing of the short film began at 00:00.

Throughout this one minute film clip, the performers completed many basic steps at an elevated tempo, including shuffles, hops, and wings.⁸⁶ None of the steps were syncopated. It appeared as though these dancers were attempting to tap in unison. Generally speaking, however, although unison may have been the initial goal, the tapping sounds resembled popping corn, especially with quicker steps. Throughout the routine, the dynamics of the taps did not change much. The dancers appeared to be more concerned about not falling off their shoes than about generating aural interest through their feet.

A close-up panning shot of the feet provided insight into toe-tap technique at this time. First, as the Meglin Kiddies rolled their shuffles, the furthest screen left dancer's ankle quickly twisted to the right, returning almost simultaneously to a stable elevated position (Fig. 60). This demonstrated how easy it was for toe-tappers to injure themselves, especially those who were not as well trained in pointe work. The Meglin Kiddies were inventive and ambitious in that they modified drawbacks by replacing the sound of the heel with a hop. Also, on several occasions, they boldly attempted to jump and click the metal taps that had been attached under their boxes.

In *Bubbles*, the Meglins performed basic wings. From a safety perspective, this was a terrifying choreographic decision. Fig. 64 displays wings in process, while Fig. 65 shows a landing from a wing. Though none of the dancers substantially left the ground, the degree to which they opened their legs varied for each person. Fig. 64 is also a representative image which explains why the taps from the Meglin's toe-tap did not create a unison sound; some dancers had already completed their wing, some were in the middle of it, and some had not begun. As far as their landing was concerned, a close

⁸⁶ For a full choreographic analysis of the toe-tap from "Bubbles," see Appendix D.

examination of the ankles, knees, and hip placement shows inconsistency from dancer to dancer. At the finish of their routine, the dancers jumped into a *sous-sus* position, arms *en haut*; this was a choreographic nod to ballet which did not align with the decisions from the rest of the piece (Fig. 66).

In this particular instance, the large number of dancers did not produce a stellar quality performance. The young Meglins were too poorly trained and too inexperienced to toe-tap. This film clip demonstrated serious technical deficiencies, and at times, it appeared that the main goal the girls had was to stay on top of their shoes (Fig. 63).

While Meglin saw fit to put many school children on their toes, Ned Wayburn believed that children should not go *en pointe* without proper preparation for fear of the dangers that could potential arise, "...to fit them to do so without danger of permanent distortion of feet and legs, enlarged ankles, and other ill effects" (139). Meglin was more concerned with catering to the masses rather than growing a smaller group in a safe way and rooted in solid technique.

"Pull in your kids, here comes Gus Edwards!"

– Commonly heard on Broadway at the beginning of the 20th century (Woolf 1)

To train his students, actor, producer, and songwriter Gus Edwards did not open a school. He did not advertise for pupils in newspapers, and he did not produce annual recitals for parents. Instead, Edwards became widely known for discovering raw talent in children on the streets and transforming them into reputable industry players ("Relayed"). Edwards and his wife Lillian were responsible for sponsoring and presenting a great

number of performance industry hopefuls on vaudeville stages and eventually Hollywood after the turn of the century.⁸⁷

Gus Edwards was the son of Morris and Johannis Simon (“Gus Edwards Dies”). His parents were of German and Polish origin. Born in Poland in 1878, amidst a great deal of political tension on the incessantly shifting border between his country and Russia, Edwards seized an opportunity to escape his circumstances (Gabler 17).⁸⁸ In 1891, at the age of thirteen, Edwards and his two brothers literally ran to Poland across the Russian border, concealed in the middle of a herd of cows; together, the three brothers figured out a way to sail across the Atlantic in hopes of a better future.⁸⁹ Upon arrival in New York City, Edwards was engaged as a worker in a cigar factory. There he sang songs for his fellow employees and eventually wrote his own songs (Gabler 17).

Whenever he could, Edwards performed on small New York stages. In 1896, he performed at Johnny Palmer’s Gayety Saloon in Brooklyn (“Gus Edwards Dies”). After one show, Edwards was asked by William Hyde, of the vaudevillian management team Hyde and Behman, to join a group called the Newsboy Quintet (Woolf 1). Eventually the ambitious Edwards joined John Sullivan’s vaudeville company as a soloist singer of ballads. He met his future lyricist partner Will Cobb while performing “...at an Army camp during the Spanish-American War...” (Gabler 17). Together, Edwards and Cobb had a string of popular songs, ruling Tin Pan Alley with such hits as “By the Light of the

87 *The Star Maker*, released by Paramount in 1939 and starring Bing Crosby, is a portrayal of Edwards’ life and career. This film is only available UCLA Film and Television Archive and has never been made available for public distribution.

88 Edwards’ birth date is unclear. Gabler published Edwards’ birth date as 1868. His obituary from the *New York Times* proposed August 18, 1881 and 1878 as possibilities. Since multiple sources stated he came to New York at 13 years old in 1891, I believe 1878 is the mostly likely of these options.

89 Another discrepancy: some sources, including his obituary, stated that he moved to Brooklyn with his parents.

Silvery Moon” and “If I Was a Millionaire” (Gabler 18). Between the two of them, they founded their own publishing house (“Gus Edwards Dies”).

As the relationship between Edwards and Cobb evolved, Edwards met the other love of his life. Edwards married actress Lillian Bleiman in 1905. This same year, they put together their first show, setting out for a life producing children’s acts (Woolf 1). Some of the Edwards’ early vaudeville shows included “Kid Kabaret,” “School Days,” and “Song Revue” (1912) (Gabler 18).⁹⁰ Edwards recalled, “Personally, I staged my first revues in a summer resort – Brighton Beach, N.Y. – took the short ones into vaudeville, such as ‘School Days’”

(“Musical Show”).

Though the couple did not have any children of their own, this did not prove to be a problem. As Lillian recalled, the children they worked with hailed from a variety of places: “They were talented



Figure 67: Gus Edwards teaching his kiddies, taken from Woolf’s “Gus Edwards’s Academy” published in 1941 (Woolf 1).

youngsters that Gus had recruited from ferryboats, street corners, alleys and wherever youngsters happened to be singing or dancing” (Gabler 18).⁹¹ The group toured all of

⁹⁰ Edwards acknowledged Florenz Ziegfeld as the originator of the “revue” with his “Follies of 1907” (“Musical Show”).

⁹¹ Once Edwards’ reputation had spread, he began holding auditions for talent to add to his acts: “From New York to the West Coast parents who detected a glimmer of talent in their offspring endeavored to

America, performing Edwards' songs in Orpheum theaters from Brooklyn to Los Angeles (Woolf 1). Gus and Lillian were known to join their kiddies on stage (Winchell 11).

Edwards treated the children in his care as his own, and they became like his family ("Relayed"). An unnamed writer stated, "...the solicitude Edwards showed for every one of his boys and girls was only matched by the friendliness of the boys and girls for each other" (Gabler 19). Among the talents that worked with Edwards were Eddie Cantor and the Marx Brothers ("Mrs. Gus"). Another notable pupil was Walter Winchell, famed radio personality. In his youth, whenever Winchell heard actors mention that they had achieved success without being aided by Edwards, Winchell admitted he wanted to reply, "That's your misfortune, mister, because many a kid who didn't get a start with Gus Edwards never got started at all!" (Winchell 11).

With Hollywood studios demanding talented performers to feature in their "talkies" and musical films, the Edwards moved their kiddies westward. In March 1930, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer released *Gus Edward's Kiddie Revue*, a 14-minute variety short (Classic Musical). This short film began with a tuxedo-wearing five-year old Douglas Scott, who introduced a couple of adagio dancers. The *danseuse* in this couple seemed to have less than proficient ballet training. Unfortunately, the routine carried an overabundance of bent legs, parallel and inward rotation of said legs, and feet that were not pointed and were at times sickled. Adagio movement quality was practically nonexistent. In order to get on top of the platform of her shoes, she executed a *piqué arabesque* onto pointe rather than using her leg muscles to support her weight and roll through her shoe (Fig. 68). Her lack of training and leg strength was masked by flashier

obtain positions for them with the impresario of youth, and auditions for the applicants were frequently held" (Woolf 2).

steps, for instance, bravura lifts and *bourrées* backward while maintaining a *port de bras en arrière* (Fig. 69).

Although this couple was not toe-tapping, they did provide a solid example of children's pointe work which seemed indicative of what would have been acceptable in popular entertainment in this era. From an early twenty-first century perspective, the dancing, particularly from the *danseuse*, was more than frightening. However, it was an interesting performance to keep in mind when watching the subsequent dance in this short film.



Figure 68: Adagio dancer from Gus Edward's *Kiddie Revue* jumping up to arabesque.



Figure 69: Adagio dancer bourré-ing backward in *Kiddie Revue*.

The adagio couple was replaced by a group of harmonizing boop-oop-a-doop girls. As the warblers strolled off stage left and a faster reprise of their song played, a large curtain opened to reveal three figures downstage center atop of a set of four stairs. Three curly-haired girls stepping in place *en pointe* and making noise, they were Gus Edwards' trio of toe-tappers.

The girls were costumed in revealing clothing, including a bejeweled spaghetti-strap bra and a miniskirt of glossy fabric hemmed in white fur. While some might perceive this clothing as sexualizing the children, what they were doing with their feet

was so remarkable that it was difficult to focus on anything but their pointe shoes for a prolonged period of time. There was an additional piece of cloth, again hemmed in fur, attached to their right wrists. Initially, it was only possible to see this attachment on the outstretched arm of the dancer on the group's right side. This was because the girls' arms were interwoven, crossing behind each other's backs. The purpose of this piece of fabric, while it could have been merely a fashionable choice, might also have been to help the young dancers distinguish between their right and their left sides. Their hair was curly and shoulder-length; as the dancers moved, it bounced with them. While they danced, the hair miraculously did not move in front of their face to obstruct their vision in any way. They were all wearing light-colored pointe shoes with a fitted piece of metal secured to the sole of the shoe, near the platform.

As the musical introduction played, the girls took steps in place *en pointe*.⁹² The girl on the group's far right side notably started on the wrong foot (Fig. 70), but made immediate efforts to correct this mistake and synchronized with the other dancers. In unison, the girls descended the stairs, starting with the left foot. While it appeared they were attempting to smile straight ahead, the kids briefly glanced downward as they descended down the stairs. Having arrived at the foot of the stairs, the video clip cut from a wide shot to a close-up. The entire dance sequence was performed in unison. It was an interesting editorial choice to begin with a film clip where one dancer very obviously had made an error and cut to a different clip a few seconds later. It could be that the girl on the group's right side was never photographed in a take in which she began on the correct foot. Perhaps the film editor did not think that the mistake was noticeable, as the curtain

92 For a full choreographic analysis of the toe-tap from *Gus Edward's Kiddie Revue*, see Appendix E.



Figure 70: Curtain opening on *Gus Edward's Kiddie Revue*, revealing one dancer starting on the wrong foot. Paused at 05:22.



Figure 71: Wide shot of the toe-tap trio from *Gus Edward's Kiddie Revue*. Paused at 05:31.



Figure 72: Wide shot of the toe-tap trio's back side from *Gus Edward's Kiddie Revue* displaying the placement of their arms. Paused at 05:47.



Figure 73: Close-up of the backs of toe-tap trio's pointe shoes. Paused at 05:52.



Figure 74: Climbing the stairs backward with the middle dancer guiding the others. Paused at 06:23.



Figure 75: The trio's final descent, arms no longer connected. Paused at 06:30.

Figures 70-75 Images from the *Gus Edward's Kiddie Revue* toe-tap (1930)⁹³

⁹³ Timing of the short film began at 00:00.

was opening and the dancers were far upstage or that it mattered at all since the final product was a short film of kiddy acts. It is difficult to know the precise circumstances of this particular filming, but most children's short films generally received minimal attention from film studios.

At the bottom of the stairs, the girls performed a series of shuffles. These shuffles were not directly to their fronts, nor were they directly to their sides. Instead, the working legs were slightly rotated outward and brushed the floor diagonally to the front. Like the adagio *danseuse* before them, their supporting legs were completely in parallel. In unison, the trio turned to change their facing from downstage to upstage in a highly synchronized manner. Rolling shuffles as they performed the sequence's break, the girls turned toward their left shoulders. As they did so, the dancers repositioned their arms around each other's waists. The arm of the dancer on the furthest screen left quickly extended and contracted as though perhaps she were having trouble balancing. However, not much attention was paid to the outstretched arm of either outside dancer throughout the entire routine, for while the arms were placed in an extended position, they were not maintained or supported by the dancers' back or arm muscles.

In all, the Gus Edwards toe-tap number lasted a little more than a minute. Throughout the clip, there were only four edits, alternating between a wide shot of the entire stage, medium shot of the dancers' full bodies, and a close-up shot of the feet and legs. The sounds of the taps were extremely clear and musical. The choreography was repetitive, essentially comprised of steps, flaps, and shuffles, the most basic of tap steps. The difficulty came with the three girls attempting to dance in perfect unison while performing hip to hip, arms interwoven. Also, traveling up and down the stairs both

forward and backward at a rapid pace provided a great challenge. The girls were able to correctly execute this sequence with steps that were not overly complicated. What was truly remarkable was that the children were capable of executing such demanding routines as they did. Nowhere in researching Gus Edwards was it stated that he had a background or even a connection to toe-tap. It was extraordinary that these children, more than Meglin's school girls, performed their steps confidently and precisely.

Toe-tappers belong in the story of popular entertainment's transition from vaudeville to the talking film. For adults like Richard Barstow and Joyce Murray, their journeys with toe-tap presented this form in a controlled, positive light, all the while showcasing their dare-devilish abilities. The legacies of teachers like Ethel Meglin and Gus Edwards lived on with their students. This passing on of dance kept novelty alive beyond the Great Depression. Each of these examples provide us insight into the state and uses of toe-tap from 1925 to 1935.

CHAPTER 4 – CONCLUSION

“When I finally studied dance – with the only teacher in town who disdained toe-tap – I learned the rules and followed them religiously... Not incidentally, I also acquired the arrogance that dismisses toe-tap as shameless artistic pretense and that places New York City at the center of the cultural universe and displaces Hollywood to the hinterlands” – Linda Brodkey (Schmidt 82)

Toe-tap is an American style of dance with a history that combines elements of tap, ballet, theatre, and film. In this thesis, I have demonstrated the origins of toe-tap and shown how many individuals have contributed to its development, a task no one else in the dance history field has undertaken to date. Uncovering patents from the United States Patent and Trademark Office, I have used these documents to expand the knowledge of the advances in American theatrical footwear pertaining to ballet, tap, and eventually toe-tap in the early twentieth century. I have located toe-tap in the development of early sound films and to support my conclusions, I have created choreographic analyses that provide an understanding of dance works that could realistically be produced as toe-tap.

When this inquiry began, I posed many questions regarding toe-tap’s role in twentieth-century American dance. The most significant question I had entering this research was what the precise beginnings of toe-tap were as a style. My guiding questions throughout this research have centered around determining in which establishments toe-tappers were allowed to perform their craft, uncovering popular attitudes toward the form, locating toe-tap within the careers of those who attempted it, and discerning what toe-tappers did after their toe-tapping careers in vaudeville or on the big screen. In the process of this research, my ultimate goal became understanding why the overall form seemed to die after the highly productive decade between 1925 and 1935, particularly as

it became clearer that for producers, performers, and theatrical shoe manufacturers, toe-tap consistently produced maximum novelty at a relatively inexpensive price.

In answering these questions, I discovered my initial assumption that toe-tap was equally related to the forms of ballet and tap dance was incorrect. Although toe-tap has a definite relationship to ballet, I found that it is not, in fact, well connected to this style of dance. Ballet has influenced toe-tap with some of its steps and, of course, its footwear. However, toe-tap choreographers have blatantly ignored many essential elements, such as ballet's stylistic principles, technique, and placement. These features, not the least of which are decorum and the requirement of silence from the feet, distinguish ballet from all other styles of dance and certainly from toe-tap.

Based on tap movement vocabulary, toe-tap is ultimately a branch of tap dance that contradicts the widely-accepted image of tap dance in the late 1920s and 1930s. Instead of African-American men performing tap dances in smoky nightclubs, toe-tap illustrates a concurrent side of tap history largely belonging to Caucasian children and adults, mainly women, capable of dancing *en pointe*. These performers were quintessentially focused on building their own reputations and developing novelty acts in the expanding entertainment industry of the time. Toe-tap employed showy steps and gaudy costumes, much like other "flash acts" of the era. It was performed in the Jazz Age at elevated tempos using complex rhythms. Props, for instance, stairs, canes, and hats, were commonly integrated. I conclude that toe-tap remains one of the most extreme forms of tap dancing ever performed.

Toe-tap as a dance form is inseparable from the economic history of its time. The American toe-tap tradition stems from toe dancers and ballet-girls who were not accepted

on opera stages toward the end of the nineteenth century. These women had little hope of improving their social or financial status at the turn of the twentieth century. American operas hired their lead dancers from reputable European opera and ballet companies. Generally, these American toe dancers worked in more popular establishments, such as vaudeville, literally translated as the “voice of the city.” Most American dancers were not trained classically, due to the lack of schools, and the general belief that solid technique was not necessarily a requirement for performance on amateur or professional stages. In densely populated urban areas, these thriving entities receptively welcomed and remunerated specialty performers regardless of technical proficiency. Vaudevillian spectators demanded novelty over artistry in exchange for their dollars.

In response, the demand for dancing shoes in the United States rose. Producers of American theatrical and dance footwear were enormously active at the beginning of the twentieth century. Tap dancers who had nailed bottle caps or bits of aluminum to the soles of their shoes welcomed fitted pieces of metal crafted specifically for this usage for the first time. With this new product, American dance shoe manufacturers acknowledged the form of tap as its own style. Thus, in many ways, the story of toe-tap is also a story of dance footwear, an integral part of the evolution of American dance after the turn of the twentieth century.

The shapes of toe shoes also were developing. Pointe shoemakers attempted to solve problems with existing toe shoes, such as reinforcing the boxes and shanks that could not handle standard uses. During the Depression, toe shoes were built to last longer so that consumers could still perform their craft. In so doing, manufacturers created shoes capable of supporting more complex and demanding contemporary dance techniques.

After the stock market crash of 1929, shoemakers were economically mindful of maintaining their businesses and their customers. They created attachments instead of entire shoes. Consumers benefitted as they were able to use their shoes for multiple purposes. Toe-tap attachments produced maximum novelty at a relatively inexpensive price. Finally, theatrical shoemakers found it necessary during this period of time to patent their products, protecting them legally from their competitors.

The decade between 1925 and 1935 was one of constant change in American history, caused by the fluctuating economy. Until the stock market crash of 1929, the United States economy was thriving. Fueled by the new “talkie,” the entertainment industry in Hollywood exploded during this time period, responding to the general plea for contemporary distractions and simultaneously selling escapism to the American public. When the first feature film with synchronized picture and sound was released in 1927, motion picture studios needed and paid talent to produce spectacles more incredible than their competitors could devise in order to satisfy their audiences.

In the early years of the Great Depression, toe-tap was one of the novelties by which a dancer could distinguish themselves. As it was in vaudeville’s heyday, stage-door parents and precocious children joined the entertainment industry in droves. Many young dancers were able to earn money for their families in both stage and film shows. Accordingly, dance schools that could promise studio work and even contracts saw a surge in their enrollment numbers and consequently their profits. This focus on the dollar pushed the evolution of toe-tap greatly during this time period. However, most dancing schools and film producers were not concerned for the safety of their students. Proper ballet training could have aided toe-tap dancers as their ankles would have been more

stabilized and they would have been more mindful of their weight placement.

Unfortunately most toe-tappers' time and technique were sacrificed for money.

Since the action of toe-tap takes place with the feet, toe-tappers could easily have been costumed in modest attire. Though ornamentation was applied to their toe shoes, jewels added, and ribbons tied into bows in front of their ankles, it did not seem to be enough to sell the final product. Therefore, sex appeal was added to toe-tap. Female toe-tappers raised their skirts and bared their legs. Every found example but the Meglin Kiddies included exposed midriffs, covering their chests with minimal amounts of fabric. Simply stated, if audience members were not interested in watching the incredible accomplishments of the feet, there were alternative viewing options; as the adage goes, sex sells.

Toe-tappers were also known for their extreme and dangerous stunts and for setting competitive records. Such feats were ways in which toe-tappers used the press to promote their careers and ultimately earn more money. While the press worked to promote the toe-tappers, their novelty also helped to sell newspapers.

Curiously, few performances of toe-tap were recorded in Hollywood after 1930. The overall form of toe-tap lost momentum after 1935, in all likelihood, because it was so dangerous. Rising musical film stars of the period, including Bill "Bojangles" Robinson and Shirley Temple, did not perform toe-tap in their movies. While Fred Astaire may have experimented with toe shoes, when it came time to solidifying his fame as a film star, he did not appear *sur les pointes*. Busby Berkeley did not film his women toe-tapping. Furthermore, as the Hollywood musical was in its infancy, the camera angles used to capture toe-tap on film were not always ideal. The prominent action of toe-tap

occurs in the lower part of the dancers' bodies, but often the dancers' feet were not recorded in the cameras' frames.

American toe-tappers of the early twentieth century left behind a legacy through newspaper clippings, newsreels, and in feature films. They produced startling work aided by shoemakers, filmmakers, creativity, and sheer nerve. But eventually, they all moved on to do other things in their lives. Advancing the art of toe-tap was never their main focus. Whether building a personal reputation in the entertainment industry or making money, toe-tappers used their art form as a means to achieving these objectives. Nevertheless, advancement in the art of toe-tap did occur during this period of time as a result of these individuals' contributions.

There are many paths for future research on toe-tap. One could explore what happened to toe-tap after the Great Depression by following the lives of individual dancers. One could investigate the fascinating sexualized costuming of toe-tap. Though we know that toe-tap existed in the United States in the early twentieth century, we do not know what kind of international following it had. Additionally, all of the toe-tappers cited in this thesis were Caucasian; further research should focus on searching out African-American toe-tappers. Finally, it would be foolish to believe that adding slippery metal to the bottom of a pointe shoe would not be dangerous. Although I have searched for records of injuries to ankles or knees, I have not been successful in finding many examples.⁹⁴ Future research on all of these subjects would greatly add to our knowledge of the overall subject.

⁹⁴ I have found one article that referenced one toe dancer, not a toe-tapper, breaking her big toe ("Why Great Dancers").

In the future, I intend to expand this research to a more comprehensive overview of American toe-tap and its appearance at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Ballets Russes and the Moderns undeniably had an effect on dance of the early twentieth century American, and these histories should be directly connected to toe-tap. I hope to further investigate the individual patent holders for dance footwear from the 1920s and 1930s, including gathering additional information about their backgrounds, why they applied for patents, and public opinions of their products. There is more to learn about each of the cited toe-tappers. I want to further explore how toe-tap kiddies learned their craft and who taught them. As mentioned in the Review of Literature, other vaudeville teams such as Toy and Wing played a part in toe-tap's legacy, though not until the second half of the 1930s, and their stories deserve to be integrated into the larger picture as, I am sure, do many others. While I am aware of the existence of materials on dance and theatre at the New York City Public Library and the film archives belonging to UCLA, USC, and MOMA, I would like to view these artifacts personally. More recollections like those of Linda Brodkey and Rochelle Zide-Booth should also be preserved as oral history.

The noisy clack of toe-tap resounded primarily between 1925 and 1935, when it was an exceptional source of novelty propelled by the economy, the Roaring Twenties, the Jazz Age, the advent of the "talkie," and the Depression era. All of these elements came together during this time period to influence popular concepts of both ballet and tap and eventually strengthened both forms through the creation of improved footwear. This uniquely American art form provides a window into dance development of the twentieth century and deserves to be understood as a factor in dance history.

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APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY OF TAP TERMS

<i>Step Name</i>	<i>Step Description</i>	<i>Can Be Used in Toe-Tap?</i>
Ball Change:	Step step; the first step shifts the body's weight onto the ball of the second foot	Yes, weight is shifted toe to toe
Brush:	An extension of the working leg in which the ball of the foot sweeps the floor in a direction away from the supporting leg until the knee straightens	Yes
Bombershay:	Step spank dig	No
Buffalo:	Step shuffle step or leap shuffle leap; typically begins and ends with the original working foot in a flexed <i>cou-de-pied devant</i>	Yes
Chug:	Weighted hop performed <i>en plié</i> that typically travels forward; can also be a weighted heel drop; can be called a buck	Yes
Cincinnati:	Spank heel shuffle step	Yes, replace heel with hop
Cramp roll:	Toe drop, toe drop on the other foot, heel drop, heel drop on the other foot; can be performed using various combinations of toe and heel drops	No
Dig:	Striking the heel on the floor; also called a jab	No
Drawback:	Step spank heel drop (supporting heel)	Yes, replace heel with hop
Flap:	Brush step, transfers weight	Yes
Hop:	A jump on one foot that lands on the same foot	Yes
Irish:	Shuffle hop step	Yes
Leap:	A jump from one foot that lands on the other foot	Yes
Maxiford:	Step shuffle leap, tap the top of the toe	Yes
Nerve tap:	Many rapid taps of the foot against the floor	Yes
Paradiddle:	Dig spank step (supporting) heel drop	No
Pick-up:	A jump that can be performed on one or two feet; after the dancer leaves the floor, the balls of the feet spank the ground and then land; can be syncopated	Yes

Riff:	As the working foot extends forward, the toe and then the heel hit the floor, followed by the heel of the supporting leg dropping, creating a total of three sounds; riffle: riff spank	No
Rolling:	Performing continuously, used with shuffles	Yes
Scuff:	Like a brush, but the heel strikes the floor instead of the ball of the foot; scuffle: scuff spank	No
Shuffle:	Brush spank	Yes
Slap:	A flap that does not transfer weight	Yes
Spank:	Back brush; contracting the working leg, the ball of the foot sweeps the floor in a direction toward the supporting leg	Yes
Stamp:	Heavily striking the floor with the entire sole of the foot, transfers weight	Yes
Step:	Transferring weight from one foot to the other	Yes
Stomp:	Heavily striking the floor with the entire sole of the foot, does not transfer weight	Yes
Tap:	Hitting the foot on the floor; usually ball of the foot	Yes
Time step:	Originating in vaudeville, a repeatable combination used to denote tempo. With hundreds of variations, a time step is a single when using “steps,” double with “flaps,” triple with “shuffles” or “shuffle steps.” For example, a single-single buck time step would be “stomp hop step step step,” while a single-double would be “stomp hop step flap step.”	Yes
Toe:	Hitting the tips of the toes on the floor	Yes
Trench:	A weighted series of foot slides in which one foot extends forward as the other slides backward. The legs constantly switch, transferring the majority of the body’s weight onto whichever leg is in front. The upper body is typically angled forward with arms extending forward in opposition to legs.	Yes
Waltz Clog:	Step shuffle ball change	Yes
Wing:	A jump that can be performed on one or two feet. As the dancer goes into the air, the sides of their feet scrape the floor, extending the legs. As the dancer lands, they perform a side spank and end with a step; can be syncopated.	Yes, sides of tips of toe scrape the floor

APPENDIX B

Toe-Tap Routine featuring Joyce Murray from *Broadway Melody*

Premiere

February 1, 1929

Production Company

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

♩ = 112

Length of Clip

00:01:22

Abbreviations used: R=Right, L=Left, B=Both, CS = Center Stage, DS = Down Stage, US = Up Stage, SL = Stage Left, SR = Stage Right, DSR = Down Stage Right, DSL = Down Stage Left, USR = Up Stage Right, USL = Up Stage Left			
Measure	Count	Action	Foot
Prep	12	2 steps (on flat), entering from SR	RL
	3&4a	Grabbing Charles King's hand three-step-turn, step	RLRL
	567	3 steps (on flat) to travel to CS in front of chorus	RLR
	8	<i>Plié</i> in 6 th position (facing DS)	Both
1		<i>Dancing in place</i>	
	1	Hop on to pointe shoe	L
	e&a	Shuffle step	RR
	2e&	Shuffle step	LL
	a3e&a4	Shuffle ball change, ball change	RRLRL
	&a5e	Hop shuffle step	RLL
	&a6e	Cross-over shuffle leap step	RRL
	&a7e&a8	Shuffle hop shuffle hop step step	RLRLRL
2	&	<i>Petite sissonne ouverte de côté</i>	L
	a1e-e&	Shuffle step step step	RRLR
	a2e-e&	Shuffle step step step	LLRL
	a3e&4	Shuffle step step step	RRLR
	5-8	<i>Camera angle displays Murray from head to mid-thigh. Therefore, it is difficult to determine what her feet are doing.</i>	
	1-2		
3		<i>Facing DSL</i>	RLR
	&3&a	Shuffle, hop, lift R leg to parallel <i>retiré</i>	R
	4	Step backward (L leg drags on floor)	LRLL
	5&a6	Brush L leg front, hop, spank step	RLR
	&a7	Shuffle, hop and lift R leg to parallel <i>retiré</i>	LR
4	&8	Hop, step backward (L leg drags on floor)	
	1&a2	Brush L leg front, hop, spank step	LRLL
	&a3	Shuffle, hop and lift leg to parallel <i>retiré</i>	RLR
	&4	Hop, step backward (L leg drags on floor) to face DS	LR
	5&a6e&a	Tap toe front, hop, demi <i>rond de jambe</i> spank step step	LRLLR
	7&8	Toe step, stomp	LLR

5	&a1 &2 &3&4 &5 &6 &7&8	Shuffle step (extend L leg DSR) Step, step in <i>plié</i> Brush front, hop, spank, hop Step step (extend L leg DSR) Step, step in <i>plié</i> Brush front, hop, spank hop	RR LR LRLR LR LR LRLR
6	&a1 &2 &3&4 &a5 &6 &7&8	Step step (extend L leg DSR) Step, step in <i>plié</i> Brush front, hop, spank, hop Shuffle step (extend L leg DSR) Step, step in <i>plié</i> Brush front, hop, spank, hop	LR LR LRLR RR LR LRLR
7	&a1 &2 &3&4 &5&6 &7&8	Shuffle step (extend L leg DSR) Step, step in <i>plié</i> Brush front, hop (face SL), step, step (face USL) Brush front, hop (face US), step, step (face USR) Brush front, hop (face SR), step, step (face DSR)	RR LR LRLR LRLR LRLR
8	&1&2 &3&4 &5&6 &7&8	Brush front, hop (face DS), step, step (face DSL) Brush front, hop (face SL), step, step (face USL) Brush front, hop (face US), step, step (face USR) Brush front, hop (face SR), step, step (face DS)	LRLR LRLR LRLR LRLR
9	&a1&a2 e& 3e&4 &a5&a6 e& 7e&a8	Syncopated wing, syncopated wing, Step step Syncopated wing step step Syncopated wing, syncopated wing, Step step Syncopated wing step step	RL RL RL RL RL RL RL RL RL RL
10	<i>Again, focus shifts to upper body. Based on the sounds, it seems that Murray continues the wing pattern.</i>		
	&a1&a2 e& 3e&4 &a5&a6 e& 7e&a8	Syncopated wing, syncopated wing, Step step Syncopated wing step step Syncopated wing, syncopated wing, Step step Syncopated wing step step	RL RL RL RL RL RL RL RL RL RL
11	&a1e&a2 &a3e&a4 &a5 – &a8	Hop shuffle, hop shuffle, hop shuffle, hop Hop shuffle, hop shuffle, hop shuffle, hop 7 Hop-shuffle's	LRLRLRL LRLRLRL LR
12	&a1e&a2 &a3e&a4 &a5 – &a8	Hop shuffle hop shuffle hop shuffle hop Hop shuffle hop shuffle hop shuffle hop 7 Hop-shuffle's	LRLRLRL LRLRLRL LR
13	e&a1 – e&a8	16 continuous hop-shuffle's	Hop on L, Shuffle on R

14	e&a1 – e&a8	16 continuous hop-shuffle's	Hop on L, Shuffle on R
15	e&a1 &2 & 3&4 &a5 &6 & 7&8	Hop shuffle, step backward (extend L leg DSR) Step step (face SL) Brush forward (45°) Hop hop hop (½ turn <i>en dehors</i> , end DSR) Step spank, step backward (extend L leg DSR) Step step (face SL) Brush forward (45°) Hop hop hop (¾ turn <i>en dehors</i> , end DS)	LRR LR L RRR LRR LR L RRR
16	&a1 &2 & 3&4 5 678	Step spank, step backward (extend L leg DSR) Step step (face USR) Brush forward (45°) Hop hop hop (½ turn <i>en dehors</i> , end DSL) Step off of pointe Cartwheel to the right (face US), traveling SL	LRR LR L RRR L
17	a1 2 34 56 78	Shuffle (on flat) Prepare arms Cartwheel to the right (face DS), traveling SR Land cartwheel/Prepare arms Cartwheel to the right (face DS), traveling SR	R
18	12 34 5678	Land cartwheel Link arms with Charles King 4 large steps off SR	LRLR

APPENDIX C

Toe-Tap Routine from “Low Down Rhythm,” featuring Joyce Murray of the *Hollywood Revue of 1929*

Premiere

June 20, 1929

Production Company

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

♩ = 104 until measure
7, then 108

Length of Clip

00:01:13

Abbreviations used: R=Right, L=Left, B=Both, CS = Center Stage, DS = Down Stage, US = Up Stage, SL = Stage Left, SR = Stage Right, DSR = Down Stage Right, DSL = Down Stage Left, USR = Up Stage Right, USL = Up Stage Left			
Measure	Count	Action	Foot
Prep	1&2&	(Off-stage)	
	3&4&	Run <i>en pointe</i> from off SR to CS, kicking her feet up behind her	RLRL
	5&6&7&	Run <i>en pointe</i> in place, kicking feet up behind her	RLRLRL
	8	Toe tap (in place)	R
1	&1	Step, kick DSR (over-crossed 45° <i>développé devant</i>)	RL
	&2	Step, kick DSL (over-crossed 45° <i>développé devant</i>)	LR
	&3	Step, kick DSR (over-crossed 45° <i>développé devant</i>)	RL
	&4	Step, kick DSL (over-crossed 45° <i>développé devant</i>)	LR
	&5	Step, kick DSR (over-crossed 45° <i>développé devant</i>)	RL
	&6	Step, kick DSL (over-crossed 45° <i>développé devant</i>)	LR
	&7	Step, kick DSR (over-crossed 45° <i>développé devant</i>)	RL
	&8&	Step step step	LRL
2	1&2&	<i>Twisting Hips R and L on Each Step</i> Step forward, step step, step backward	RLRL
	3&4&	Step step step tap	RLRL
	5&6&	Step forward, step step, step backward	LRLR
	7&8&	Step step step step	LRLR
3	1&2&	Step forward, step step, step backward	LRLR
	3&4&	Step step step step	LRLR
	5&6&	Step forward, step step, step backward	RLRL
	7&8	Step step step	RLRL
4		<i>Sequence of kicks turning en dehors – direction of kick not always clear, most are parallel or turned in</i>	
	1&	Hop (End facing USR), kick side	RL
	2&	Hop (End facing USL), kick front	RL
	3&	Hop (End facing DSR), kick between front and side	RL
	4&	Hop (End facing SL), kick side	RL
	5&	Hop (End facing DS), kick side	RL
	6&	Hop (End facing SR), kick front	RL
	7&	Hop (End facing USL), kick front	RL
	8&	Hop (End facing DS), kick side	RL

5	1&	Hop (End facing SR), kick side	RL
	2&	Hop (End facing USL), kick side	RL
	3&	Hop (End facing DSL), kick front	RL
	4&	Hop (End facing SR), kick side	RL
	5&	Hop (End facing USL), kick between front and side	RL
	6&	Hop (End facing DSL), kick side	RL
	7&	Hop (End facing DS), kick front	RL
	&8&	Hop hop hop (traveling SR)	RL
6		<i>Pendulum kicks in place, continuously hopping on supporting foot</i>	
	1	Hop, kick front (45°)	RL
	2	Hop, kick back attitude (45°)	RL
	3	Hop, kick front (90°)	RL
	4	Hop, kick back attitude (45°)	RL
	5	Hop, kick front (90°)	RL
	6	Hop, kick back attitude (45°)	RL
	7	Hop, kick front (90°)	RL
	8	Hop, kick back attitude (45°)	RL
7	1	Hop, kick front (90°)	RL
	2	Hop, kick back attitude (45°)	RL
	3	Hop, kick front (90°)	RL
	4	Hop, kick back attitude (45°)	RL
	5	Hop, kick front (90°)	RL
	6	Hop, kick back attitude (45°)	RL
	7	Hop, kick front (45°)	RL
	&8&	Step step step	LRL
8	1&2&	Stamp, hop (L leg kicks side), step step (½ turn toward L shoulder)	RRLR
	3&4&	Stamp, hop (R leg kicks side), step step (½ turn toward R shoulder)	LLRL
	5&6	Stamp, hop (L leg kicks side), step	RRL
9	1&2&	Stamp, hop (L leg kicks side), step step (½ turn toward L shoulder)	RRLR
	3&4&	Stamp, hop (R leg kicks side), step step (½ turn toward R shoulder)	LLRL
	5&6	Stamp, hop (L leg kicks side), step	RRL
	&7&8&	Stamp, hop (L leg kicks side), step step step	RRLRL
10	1&	Step forward (DSL), step in place (extend R leg side)	RL
	2&	Step forward, tap tip of toe	RL
	3&	Step step	LR
	4&	Step forward (DSR), step in place (extend L leg side)	LR
	5&	Step forward, tap tip of toe	LR
	6&	Step step	RL
	7&	Step forward (DSL), step in place (extend R leg side)	RL
	8&	Step forward, tap tip of toe	RL

11	&1	Step step	LR
	&2	Step forward (DSR), step in place (extend L leg side)	LR
	&3	Step forward, tap tip of toe	LR
	&4	Step step	RL
	&5	Step forward (DSL), step in place (extend R leg side)	RL
	&6	Step forward, tap tip of toe	RL
	7	Step	L
	&8	Step step	RL
12	&1	<i>Legs turned-out, using large pli� en pointe</i> Hop step (traveling backward)	LR
	&2	Hop step (traveling backward)	RL
	&3&4	Hop step step step (� turn toward left shoulder)	LRLR
	&5	Hop step (traveling backward)	RL
	&6	Hop step (traveling backward)	LR
	&7&8	Hop step step step (� turn toward left shoulder)	RLRL
13	&1	Hop step (traveling backward)	LR
	&2	Hop step (traveling backward)	RL
	&3&4	Hop step step step (� turn toward left shoulder)	LRLR
	&5	Hop (� turn toward left shoulder) step	RL
	&6	Hop step	LR
	&7&8	Hop step step step	RLRL
14	1&2& 3&4&	4 Hops (L leg slowly extending forward to 45�) Hop (L leg kicks to 90�), hop hop hop (L leg comes into a position between <i>parallel pass�</i> and a back <i>attitude</i> as body turns to face SR)	RRRR RRRR
	5&	Hop, kick front (90�)	RL
	6&	Hop, kick back attitude (45�)	RL
	7&	Hop, kick front (90�)	RL
	8&	Hop, kick back attitude (45�)	RL
15	&1&	<i>Traveling SR</i> Hop, kick front (90�), step	RLL
	2&	Toe tap, step	RR
	3&	Toe tap, step	LL
	4&	Toe tap, step	RR
	5&	Toe tap, step	LL
	6&7&8&	Run <i>en pointe</i> from off-stage, kicking her feet up behind her	RLRL

APPENDIX D

Toe-Tap Routine featuring the Meglin Kiddies from *Bubbles*

Premiere

1929

Production Company

Vitaphone

(Warner Brothers)

♩=138

Length of Clip

00:00:59

Abbreviations used: R=Right, L=Left, B=Both, CS = Center Stage, DS = Down Stage, US = Up Stage, SL = Stage Left, SR = Stage Right, DSR = Down Stage Right, DSL = Down Stage Left, USR = Up Stage Right, USL = Up Stage Left			
Measure	Count	Action	Foot
Prep	5&a6&a7&a8	Girls run to places for entering the stage	
1	&a1e&a2 &a3e&a4 &a5e&a6 &a7e&a8	<i>Traveling forward</i> Shuffle hop flap ball change Shuffle hop flap ball change Shuffle hop flap ball change Shuffle hop flap ball change	RLRLR LRLRL RLRLR LRLRL
2	&a1e&a2 &a3e&a4 &a5ee&a6e &a7e&a8	Shuffle hop flap ball change Shuffle hop flap ball change <i>In place</i> Shuffle hop shuffle step shuffle step Shuffle hop shuffle flap	RLRLR LRLRL RLRLL RLRR
3 <i>Dancer counts not consistent</i>	a1e&a2 &a3e&a4e &a5e&a6 a7e&a8	Shuffle step, shuffle ball change Shuffle hop shuffle step, shuffle step Shuffle step, shuffle ball change Shuffle hop shuffle step, shuffle step	LLRLR RLRLL RRLLR LRLLR
4 <i>Dancer counts not consistent</i>	a1e&a2 &a3e&a4e &a5ee&a6e &a7e&a8&	Shuffle step, shuffle ball change Shuffle hop shuffle step, shuffle step Shuffle hop shuffle step shuffle step Shuffle hop shuffle flap step	LLRLR RLRLL RLRLL RLRRL
5	1&2e&a 3&4e&a 5&6e&a 7&8e&a	<i>Single-Double Buck Time Steps</i> Stomp hop step flap step Stomp hop step flap step Stomp hop step flap step Stomp hop step flap step	RLRLR LRLRL RLRLR LRLRL
6	1&2e&a 3&4e&a &a5ee&a6e &a7e&a8	Stomp hop step flap step Stomp hop step flap step Shuffle hop shuffle step shuffle step Shuffle hop shuffle flap	RLRLR LRLRL RLRLL RLRR
7	12& 34 56& 78	Wing, wing, hop (no syncopation) Wing, hop Wing, wing, hop (no syncopation) Wing, hop	BBB BB BBB BB

8	12& 34 &a5ee&a6e &a7e&a8	Wing, wing, hop (no syncopation) Wing, hop Shuffle hop shuffle step shuffle step Shuffle hop shuffle flap	BBB BB RLRRL RLRR
9	&a1e&a2 &a3e&a4 &a5e&a6 &a7e&a8	Shuffle step shuffle ball change Shuffle step shuffle ball change Shuffle step shuffle ball change Shuffle step shuffle ball change	RRLR LLRRL RRLR LLRRL
10	&a1e&a2 &a3e&a4 &a5ee&a6e &a7e&a8	Shuffle step shuffle ball change Shuffle step shuffle ball change Shuffle hop shuffle step shuffle step Shuffle hop shuffle flap	RRLR LLRRL RLRRL RLRR
11	&a1e&a2 3 4 56 7&8	Shuffle step shuffle ball change Shuffle hop shuffle step shuffle step Shuffle hop Spank hop, brush hop Step step step (all in place)	LLRRL RLRRL RL RLRL RLR
12	a1a23 &a4 &a5ee&a6e &a7e&a8	Toe click jump, toe click jump, small hop (in place) Toe click jump, small hop (in place) Shuffle hop shuffle step shuffle step Shuffle hop shuffle flap	BBB BB RLRRL RLRR
13	&a1&2 &3&4 &a5&6 &7&8	Shuffle step step step Brush hop, spank hop Shuffle step step step Brush hop, spank hop	LLRL RLRL RRLR LRLR
14	&a1&2 &3&4 &a5ee&a6e &a7e&a8	Shuffle step step step Brush hop, spank hop Shuffle hop shuffle step shuffle step Shuffle hop shuffle flap	LLRL RLRL RLRRL RLRR
15	e&a12a34 a56a78	<i>Adapted drawback – traveling backward</i> Hop shuffle step, spank hop step Hop shuffle step, spank hop step	LRR LRL LRR LRL
16	e&a12a3&4 5e&a6 7e&a8	Hop shuffle step, spank hop step hop Step shuffle ball change Step shuffle step sous-sus	LRR LRL RLLR LRR B

APPENDIX E

Toe-Tap Routine from *Gus Edward's Kiddie Revue*

Premiere

March 15, 1930

Production Company

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

♩=112

Length of Clip

00:01:18

Abbreviations used: R=Right, L=Left, B=Both, CS = Center Stage, DS = Down Stage, US = Up Stage, SL = Stage Left, SR = Stage Right, DSR = Down Stage Right, DSL = Down Stage Left, USR = Up Stage Right, USL = Up Stage Left			
Measure	Count	Action	Foot
1	1	Curtain opens (dancers are hidden)	
	2	"	
	3	"	
	4	"	
	5	Step in place	R
	6	Step in place	L
	7	Step in place	R
	8	Hold	
2	1	Step down to 3 rd stair	L
	2	Step down to 2 nd stair	R
	3	Step down to 1 st stair	L
	4	Step down to floor	R
	5	Step in place	L
	6	Step in place	R
	7	Step in place	L
	8	Step in place	R
3		<i>Sequence of rolling shuffles</i>	
	&a1	Shuffle step	LL
	e&	Shuffle step	RR
	a2e	Shuffle step	LL
	&a	Shuffle step	RR
	3e&	Shuffle step	LL
	a4	Shuffle step	RR
	e&a	Shuffle step	LL
	5e&	Shuffle step	RR
	a6e	Shuffle step	LL
	&a	Shuffle	RR
	7e&a	Hop shuffle, hop shuffle	LRLR
	8	Hop	R

4	&a1e	Shuffle	L
	&a2	Step shuffle	LR
	&a3e	Hop shuffle	LR
	&a4	Hop (increase pli�)	L
	&a5e	Shuffle	R
	&a6	Step shuffle	RL
	&a7	Hop shuffle	RL
	&a8	Hop (increase pli�)	R
		Shuffle step (beg 180� turn toward left shoulder)	LL
5	&a1	Shuffle step	RR
	&a2	Shuffle step	LL
	&a3	Shuffle hop (end turn, facing stairs)	RL
	&a4	Shuffle flap	RR
	&a5	Side shuffle forward flap (up 1 st stair step)	LL
	&a6	Side shuffle forward flap (2 nd step)	RR
	&a7	Side shuffle forward flap (3 rd step)	LL
	&a8	Side shuffle forward flap (top step)	RR
		Step	L
6	&a1	Shuffle step	RR
	&a2	Shuffle step	LL
	&a3	Shuffle hop	RL
	&a4	Shuffle flap	RR
	&a5	Step (Descend to 3 rd stair step)	RL
	&a6	Step	L
	&a7	Step	R
	&a8	Hop shuffle step	LRR
		Step (Descend to 2 nd stair step)	L
7	&a1	Step	R
	&a2	Shuffle step	LL
	&a3	Shuffle step	RR
	&a4	Shuffle step	LL
	&a5	Shuffle step	RR
	&a6	Shuffle step	RR
	&a7	Step (Descend to 1 st step)	L
	&a8	Step (Descend to stage floor)	R

7	&a1	<i>Sequence of rolling shuffles</i> Shuffle step (beg 180° turn toward left shoulder)	LL
	e&	Shuffle step	RR
	a2e	Shuffle step	LL
	&a	Shuffle step	RR
	3e&	Shuffle step	LL
	a4e	Shuffle step (end turn, facing stairs)	RR
	&a	Shuffle step	LL
	5e&	Shuffle step	RR
	a6e	Shuffle step	LL
	&a7	Shuffle hop	RL
	e&a8	Shuffle ball change	RRL
8	e&a	Hop shuffle	LR
	1	Step (up 1 st stair step)	R
	&	Step (2 nd step)	L
	2	Step (3 rd step)	R
	&	Step (top step)	L
	3	Step	R
	&	Step (descend to 3 rd step, facing US)	L
	4	Step	R
	e&a	Shuffle step	LL
	5e&	Shuffle step	RR
	a6e	Shuffle step	LL
	&a7	Shuffle step	RR
	&	Step (top step, facing SL)	L
	8	Step	R
9	e&a	Shuffle step	LL
	1e&	Shuffle step	RR
	a2e	Shuffle step	LL
	&a3	Shuffle hop	RL
	e&a4	Shuffle ball change	RRL
	5	Leap shuffle step	RLL
	&	Step (Descend to 3 rd step)	R
	6	Step	L
	e&a	Step	R
	7	Step	L
	e&a	Step	R
	8	Step	L

10	&a1	Hop shuffle	LR
	&	Step in place	R
	2	Step (Descend to 2 nd step)	L
	e	Step in place	R
	&	Step in place	L
	a	Step in place	R
	3	Step in place	L
	&	Step in place	R
	4	Step in place	L
	&a5	Hop shuffle	RL
	&	Step in place	L
	6	Step (Descend to 1 st step)	R
	e	Step in place	L
	&	Step in place	R
	a	Step in place	L
	7	Step in place	R
	&	Step in place	L
	8	Step in place	R
11	e&a	Shuffle step	LL
	1e&	Shuffle step	RR
	a2e	Shuffle step	LL
	&a3	Shuffle step	RR
	&	Step (Descend to floor)	L
	4	Step (Begin turn toward left shoulder)	R
	e&a	Shuffle step	LL
	5e&	Shuffle step	RR
	a6e	Shuffle step	LL
12	&a1	Hop shuffle step (shuffle and step on 1 st step)	LRR
	&a2	Hop shuffle step (shuffle and step on 2 nd step)	RLL
	&a3e&a4	Hop shuffle hop shuffle hop shuffle hop	LRLRLRL
	&a5	Hop shuffle step (shuffle and step on 3 rd step)	LRR
	&a6	Hop shuffle step (shuffle and step on top step)	RLL
	&a7e&a8	Hop shuffle hop shuffle hop shuffle hop (face SL)	LRLRLRL
13	&a1	Shuffle step	RR
	e&a	Shuffle step	LL
	2e&	Shuffle step	RR
	a3e&a4	Shuffle hop shuffle leap toe	LRLLR
	&a5	Step shuffle step	RLL
	&6	Step Step (1 st step shifts to 3 rd stair)	RL
	&a7	Step shuffle step	RLL
	&8	Step Step (1 st step shifts to 2 nd stair)	RL

14	&a1	Step	R
	a2e	Shuffle step	LL
	&	Flap step step	RLR
	3	Step	L
	e	Step forward	R
	&a4	Step	L
	5	Spank step	RR
	&a6	Step in place	L
	7	Hop shuffle step	LRR
	&	Step (Up to 3 rd stair, pivot R 90° to face DS)	L
	6	Step in place	R
	&	Step (Down to 2 nd stair)	L
15	7	Step in place	R
	&	Step (Descend to 1 st stair)	L
	8	Step (Descend to floor)	R
	&a1	Shuffle step	LL
	e&	Shuffle step	RR
	a2e	Shuffle step	LL
	&a3	Shuffle step	RR
	&	Step backward (Up to 1 st stair)	L
	4	Tap	R
	&a5	Hop shuffle step	LRR
	&	Step backward (Up to 2 nd stair)	L
	6	Tap	R
16	&a7	Hop shuffle step	LRR
	&	Step backward (Up to 3 rd stair)	L
	8	Step in place	R
	&a1	Shuffle step	LL
	e&	Shuffle step	RR
	a2e	Shuffle step	LL
	&a3	Shuffle step	RR
	&	Step backward (Up to top stair)	L
	4	Step in place	R
	&a5	Shuffle step	LL
	e&a	Drawback step	RL
	6e&	Shuffle step	LL
	a7e&a8	Leap shuffle hop shuffle hop (last hop lands in plié, balancing on R foot)	RLRL

17	&a1	Hop shuffle step	RLL
	&	Step in place	R
	2	Step down to 3 rd stair	L
	&	Step in place	R
	3	Step in place (twist hips to the right)	L
	&	Step in place	R
	4	Step down to 2 nd stair	L
	&	Step in place	R
	5	Step in place (twist hips to the right)	L
	&	Step in place	R
	6	Step down to 1 st stair	L
	&	Step in place	R
	7	Step in place (twist hips to the right)	L
	&	Step in place	R
	8	Step down to floor	L
18	&	Step in place	R
	1	Step in place	L
	&	Step in place	R
	2	Step in place	L
	&	Step in place	R
	3	Step in place	L
	&	Step in place	R
	4	Step in place	L
	5e&6	Step shuffle leap toe	RLLR
	7e&a	Step shuffle leap toe	RLLR
	8	Leap and pose (hold)	R