PART II

Jazz Dance History

Jazz dance history is rich and extensive. Part II explores this history from its origins to today. For the purposes of this book, the history has been divided into four sections: the roots of jazz dance during the slavery period in the United States; from emancipation through the 1960s; from the 1970s to today; and a historical movement chart. This history is intended to give a broad, sweeping overview rather than a detailed inventory of all aspects of jazz dance. Many things that are mentioned only briefly in the historical overview are presented in more detail later in the book.

Takiyah Nur Amin illuminates the roots of jazz dance by looking at West African dance and its adaptations during slavery. She enumerates the particular tribes of the enslaved peoples brought to the United States and discusses the dance elements they shared. These distinct movement and social characteristics later serve as the foundation for jazz dance in America. As West African rhythms and movements fuse with a European aesthetic, the jazz dance tree begins to grow.

Jill Flanders Crosby and Michèle Moss pick up the story after emancipation, tying the development of jazz dance to the concurrent development of jazz music. Beginning with minstrelsy and vaudeville, the authors sketch out the diverse journey of this dance form. The jazz age of the early twentieth century, the hybrid styles of Broadway, changes in social dancing after the advent of bebop

Jimmy Slyde. Photo from Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

music, and new dance techniques were all a part of the mix and bring us up through the 1960s.

Crosby and Moss also look at the most recent decades of jazz dance history beginning with the 1970s. Jazz dance continues its journey of experimenting, blending, and innovating, resulting in contrasting jazz dance styles. As the genre accepts and adopts influences from American pop culture, global cultures, and other dance genres, its African roots become increasingly diluted in most jazz dance styles, until its most apparent truth becomes its changing nature. In addition to new jazz dance styles, the authors discuss the emergence of concert jazz dance companies, the revival of jazz as a social dance form, jazz dance training, and the relationship between jazz dance and various styles of music.

The historical overview is followed by an historical movement chart, written by Tom Ralabate. It outlines vernacular jazz dance steps, movements, and styles by era and the musical styles that dominated during each period. Although many movements overlap and are adapted to other music styles, the organization of this chart clearly depicts how vernacular jazz dance never stops changing.

The history of jazz dance is a fascinating and complex journey through American history with branches reaching far beyond the United States. We now see that jazz dance is a global phenomenon. Part II traces this journey through time, place, people, music, and culture, offering a vivid picture of the constantly evolving jazz dance landscape.

6

The African Origins of an American Art Form

Takiyah Nur Amin

Jazz dance, a uniquely American dance form, is rooted in and informed by African movement idioms and aesthetics that traveled to the United States with the trafficking of African people, commonly referred to as the Middle Passage or the transatlantic slave trade. During the enslavement era, African dances were transformed into African-American dances with the addition of various movements derived from whites. Post-enslavement and throughout the twentieth century, African-American dance evolved in several directions, one of which was jazz dance. While the term *jazz dance* was not coined until the 1920s, the primary ancestry of jazz dance can be found by studying African dance forms and how they changed in the context of plantation life.

Africa is the world's second largest continent, with more than fifty countries and several thousand cultural groups. Which *specific* influences found their way into jazz dance? What were the dances and movement aesthetics of the Africans who came to the Western Hemisphere through this system of forced migration? What indicates the presence of the African aesthetic within the lexicon of jazz dance vocabulary today? And what are the implications of seeing African-based movement and aesthetics as the primary aspect of jazz dance, with other cultural influences adding onto that base?

Diversity in the Diaspora

While many students are somewhat familiar with the presence of people of African descent in the West through the tragedy of the Middle Passage or

transatlantic slave trade, it is arguable that fewer know about the presence of Africans in the Americas prior to that long-standing historical incident. Scholars have worked to document the presence and widespread influence of African cultural groups in the West, not just before enslavement but also before European conquest and the purported discovery of America by Christopher Columbus in 1492.

Dr. Ivan Van Sertima painstakingly documented this crucial aspect of early history in *They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America*.[1] Van Sertima forwarded evidence of the African presence in the "new world," including details of expeditions launched from Mali to the West in 1310, studies of analogous cultural traits between African cultural groups and indigenous people of the Americas, and a thorough examination of artifacts, stone sculptures (including the famous Olmec Heads), documents, and other cultural data. Cheikh Anta Diop and John Henrik Clarke, among others, have also written about the pre-enslavement presence of African people in the West dating back to at least 750 BC,[2] leaving a rigorous body of work for any student interested in detailed study of this topic.

While in-depth accounts of the movement/dance aesthetics of people of African descent in the Western Hemisphere during this period are not readily available, it is not a far-reaching assumption to suggest that even at that time, the movement/dance aesthetics of African people traveled with them. Regarding the much later transatlantic slave trade, it should be noted that the first group of enslaved Africans to come to what we know today as the first permanent settlement in the United States were brought as cargo by the Dutch to Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619. Notably, the Spanish brought enslaved Africans even earlier in 1526, but it was to a shorter-lived settlement near present-day Winyah Bay, South Carolina, the site of the first revolt of enslaved Africans in the United States.

Slavery was central to the context of European colonial efforts to establish trading settlements globally, with the Portuguese bringing enslaved Africans to the Caribbean some ten years before Columbus's exploits. As such, by the time Africans were brought to the Jamestown colony, a million people of African descent had been brought to various parts of South America and the Caribbean to work in both the Portuguese and Spanish colonies.[3]

Information on the numbers of people transported to the West and cultural specificity among groups of enslaved Africans can be found in the work of Michael A. Gomez, who reports that "the total number of Africans imported into the Americas is somewhere between 9.6 and 10.8 million, while the total export figure is about 11.9 million. Concerning North America in particular . . . the total import figure [is] at 480,930 or 481,000 for the sake

of convenience. The total is 5 percent of the 10 million or so brought into the New World. The Atlantic Slave Trade spanned some four hundred years, from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. By 1650 the number of Africans transported reached 10,000 per year."[4]

Gomez presents a "Final Revision of Origins and Percentages of Africans Imported into British North America and Louisiana" (table 6.1), which details the national point of origin for persons coming from the continent to the United States. While he accounts for 98.2 percent of enslaved Africans, the remaining 1.8 percent is explained as persons from what Gomez calls the "Mozambique-Madagascar contribution," referring to people from those African nations. Given this information, one can assess that the persons accounted for in these percentages were primarily from the dominant cultural groups in each land mass. Therefore, the ethnic groups below were very likely the most prominent among Africans in the United States.[5]

It is important to note that these cultural groups brought their own distinctive beliefs, cultural practices, lore, and rituals including dance through the Middle Passage. By way of example, consider the dance masquerade Gelede of the Yoruba people, a "lavish, colorful three-day festival" that honors the spiritual potency of female energy and motherhood in the visage of Iyanla, the "Great Mother."[6] By contrast, the Zigbliti dance of the peoples of Cote d'Ivoire commemorates the daily pounding of corn.[7] Cultural groups also emphasized different parts of the body while dancing. According to Jacqui Malone, "The Anlo-Ewe and Lobi of Ghana emphasize the upper body while the Kalabari of Nigeria give a subtle accent to the hips . . . the Akan of Ghana use the hands and feet in specific ways . . . strong contraction-release

Table 6.1. Final revision of origins and percentages of Africans imported into British North America and Louisiana

Senegambia	14.5%
Sierra Leone	15.8%
Gold Coast (of Ghana)	13.1%
Bight of Benin	4.3%
Bight of Biafra	24.4%
West Central Africa	26.1%

Sources: Adapted from Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 29, and Walter C. Rucker, *The River Flows On: Black Resistance, Culture, and Identity Formation in Early America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), 126.

movements of the pelvis and upper torso characterize both female and male dancing in Agbor [Nigeria.]"[8] This illustrates the salient point that African dances were not and are not all the same across cultural groups and landmasses.

Notably, during enslavement in the United States there was no attempt to keep families or communities together or to maintain their unique cultural differences and proclivities; the disregard for the diversity of African societies was emblematic of most enslavement contexts. It was this lack of respect for African cultural differences and an increased need to create a race-based society in order to maintain the social status of white landowners that set the stage for the blending of cultural perspectives and practices that later began to emerge in this new context for Africans in America.

Now that a picture is appearing of the cultural diversity of the African people who brought their traditions to the West, what were the dances that emerged from the blending of those communities in the context of enslavement and what are the aesthetic markers of these movement vocabularies? How do these movement idioms become the basis for what we know today as jazz dance?

From Slavery to the Stage

Buck Dance. Juba. Pigeon Wing. Buzzard Lope. Turkey Trot. Snake Hips. Fish Tail. Fish Bone. Camel Walk. Cakewalk. Ring Shout. Water Dances.[9] These names all refer to dances that emerged from the blending of various African cultural groups during the period of enslavement (see table 6.2). While the presence of drums and the act of drumming or using other musical instruments (a central characteristic in many African cultural groups) was routinely prohibited among enslaved people in various states, the presence of dance persisted on plantations, whether openly for the pleasure and entertainment of slave owners or in secret, sacred gatherings among the enslaved only.[10] Additionally, while not all slave owners encouraged or supported the dancing of enslaved people, the aforementioned movement traditions still emerge in the historical record and have been noted by many dance writers. These dances have several characteristics in common:

- the emphasis on patting the body/stamping the feet (to establish a staccato, consistent rhythm) as in the Buck dance, Jig, and Juba (also known as "Pattin' Juba")
- the imitation of other living things observed in the natural world as in the Pigeon Wing, Buzzard Lope, Turkey Trot, Snake Hips, Fish Tail, Fish Bone, and Camel Walk dances

- the emphasis on congenial but competitive dancing as in the Jig, Cakewalk, and Water Dance
- the use of dance as a central commemorative and religious act as in the Ring Shout and Buzzard Lope[11]

The presence of these dance traditions in plantation settings is evidence that dance was a communal expression that became the basis of popular black dances in the U.S. post-enslavement. The diverse cultural groups noted in table 6.1 necessarily blended, creating a rich collection of African-derived movements that were later adopted, borrowed, and/or appropriated by dominant cultural groups.

Dance scholar Katrina Hazzard-Donald notes that "though the ceremonial context and specific movements varied from group to group, the basic West African dance was strikingly similar across ethnic lines" and that "as a result, interethnic assimilation in the new cultural environment was more easily facilitated in dance than in other aspects of the African culture, such as language."[12] As an illustration of this blending, consider that from 1724 to 1817, people of African, French, and Spanish descent mingled in Congo Square, a plaza in present-day Louis Armstrong Park in the Treme neighborhood of New Orleans.[13] Congo Square was a central gathering place for music and dance on Sundays where those assembled "did not constitute an audience of detached observers; for they joined the performers by clapping their hands, stomping their feet, patting their bodies, answering calls of chanters, adding improvised intonations and ululations (shrills in sometimes piercing

Table 6.2. Ethnic groups by region

Senegambia Region	Wolof, Fula, Mandinka
Sierra Leone	Temne, Mende
Gold Coast [of Ghana] and Cote d'Ivoire	Akan, Fon, Mande, Kru
Bight of Benin	Yoruba, Ewe, Fon, Allada, Mahi
Bight of Biafra [including Gabon, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea]	Igbo, Tikar, Bubi, Bamileke, Ibibio
West Central Africa [Angola]	Kongo, Mbundu
Mozambique/Madagascar	Macua/Malagasy

Sources: Adapted from Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 29, and Walter C. Rucker, *The River Flows On: Black Resistance, Culture, and Identity Formation in Early America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), 126.

pitches), singing songs that accompanied the dances, shaking gourd rattles, and replacing dancers who became fatigued." The dances at Congo Square, often patterned after West and Central African circle or ring dances, evolved over time to include European-derived styles accompanied by English-based songs alongside African-derived dances.[14]

By the 1830s, black sociocultural dances were being popularized for white audiences in minstrel shows, a form of theatrical entertainment that largely caricatured black people. While folk/vernacular dances of English, Scottish, and Irish origin were being performed as a part of this early theatrical tradition in the United States, the tradition of blackface was also gaining popularity. White performers covered their faces with black greasepaint or burnt cork and performed hyperstylized, satirized versions of black dances derived from plantation traditions; the most common finale of any minstrel show included the audience participating in a Cakewalk.[15]

By the time vaudeville developed in the United States in the late 1870s, touring groups of both black and white blackface-wearing minstrels had become commonplace in American entertainment. Vaudeville shows, which included such diversions as acrobats, jugglers, child performers, and chorus girls, had become the vehicle through which ragtime, a style of music from New Orleans, was being popularized. This new music, deeply grounded in African aesthetic principles with its emphasis on syncopation, polyrhythm, and percussive use of the piano, was the historical antecedent to jazz music.

Early jazz dance was primarily a folk/vernacular form of movement that evolved alongside the development of jazz music in the United States; it was

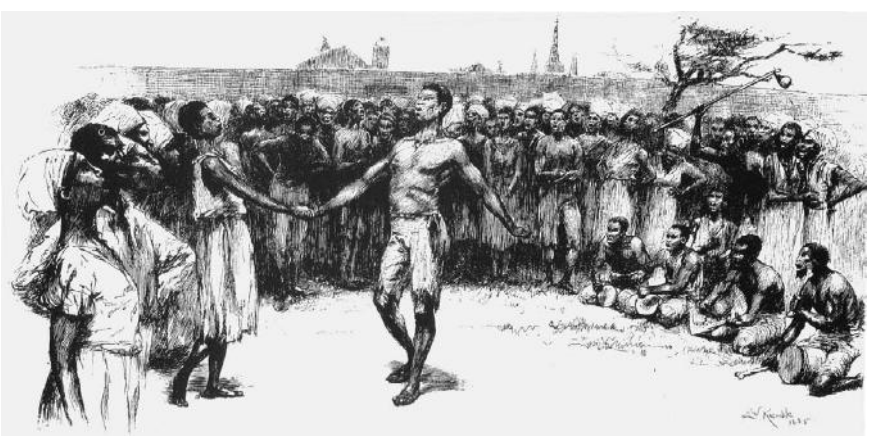

Figure 6.1. "The Bamboula" drawn in Congo Square, New Orleans, by E. W. Kemble, in *Century Magazine* (1886).

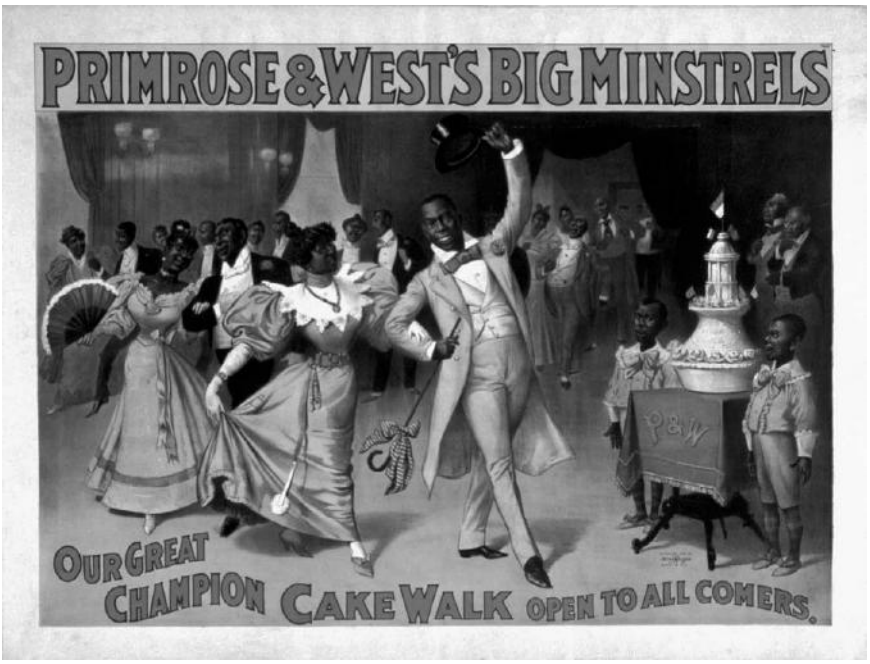

Figure 6.2. The Cake Walk. Created and "copyright 1896 by The Strobridge Lith Co, Cinti & N.Y."

later amplified and hyperstylized for social and theatrical settings. The historical result of the African cultural presence in the United States and the dance traditions that emerged formed the basis for many American theatrical and stage dances that birthed minstrelsy, vaudeville, and what we know today as jazz dance. While it is important to recognize that European-derived couple dances were being popularized in America in the early twentieth century, social dances were circulating in black communities, which actively blended them with Africanist elements; the result was a bevy of popular dances including the Charleston, the Black Bottom, the Suzy-Q, and the Lindy Hop.

Creative Threads, Aesthetic Connections

Scholars have worked to position the aesthetic characteristics of dances derived from West African cultural groups as the primary antecedent to dance forms that later emerged from black communities in the United States. Africanist aesthetics as described in contemporary scholarship affirm the centrality of African movement vocabulary, ethos, and approach to movement invention in jazz dance. In his groundbreaking 1966 article, *An Aesthetic of the Cool: West African Dance*, Yale University professor Robert Farris Thompson described the aesthetic traits of West African music and

dance as "the dominance of a percussive concept of performance, multiple meter, apart playing and dancing, call-and-response, and, finally, the songs and dances of derision."[16] Building on Thompson's research, Marshall and Jean Stearns, authors of the seminal text on jazz dance, described the characteristics of African dance identifiable in the United States as the use of bare feet, movement performed with bent knees, a crouched position with flexibility at the waist, the imitation of animal movement, emphasis on improvisation, the emphasis on centrifugal movement that "explodes outward from the hips," and the emphasis on a propulsive rhythm or "swing" quality in the movement.[17]

Other dance scholars including Jacqui Malone, Kariamu Welsh, and Katrina Hazzard-Donald affirm the perspectives of Thompson and the Stearns when identifying the defining characteristic of African-based movement aesthetics.[18] The defining characteristics for jazz dance are essentially analogous to the defining traits of primarily West African music and dance aesthetics listed above. What the Stearns note "as a powerful, propulsive rhythm, which can appear in the singing, the stamping, the clapping, and the dancing all at one time" coupled with their identification of the basic traits of African-American dance as being rooted in "improvisation, the Shuffle, the counterclockwise circle dance, and the call-and-response pattern in voice, dance, and rhythm"[19] are firmly ensconced in the lexicon of jazz dance. While it is evident that jazz dance today has absorbed other influences over time, it is grounded in an Africanist aesthetic in terms of its fundamental movement vocabulary, rhythmic structure, relationship to music, and approach to movement invention.

Conclusion

Jazz dance is a uniquely American art form because of the amalgam of largely African and European cultural influences that blended—either by force or by choice—on this continent. While some recognize African cultural markers in jazz dance, others have construed those aspects as a "contributory" force in the development of the art form, or they have ignored them altogether. This perspective is dubious because it suggests that somehow Africanist elements were appended to a preexisting movement vocabulary that then gave rise to jazz dance.

It has been demonstrated here that the dominant aesthetic inclinations of jazz dance are decidedly Africanist; it becomes clear that other cultural influences and dance styles found today within the lexicon of jazz dance were affixed to African idioms and movement approaches in order for the dance form we call jazz to emerge. By recognizing the primacy of African-derived

movements in the makeup of jazz dance and acknowledging the mixed heritage of the form as ultimately the result of both cultural borrowing and appropriation between African and European influences, the rich roots of jazz dance emerge. We begin to understand this dance form as being grounded not only in an African-derived movement vocabulary but also in an African cultural ethos that continues to inform the dance today, even if its cultural roots go unacknowledged or are otherwise obscured.

In this way, we understand that African people in the West before, during, and after enslavement contributed not *to* jazz dance but to the larger national and global dance landscape *through* jazz dance. By de-centering the primacy of non-African cultural contributions, we can understand jazz dance as an amalgamation of cultural influences that remains persistently African at its core.

Notes

1. Ivan van Sertima, *They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America* (New York: Random House, 2003), 32–35.

2. James W. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (New York: Touchstone, 2007), 42–43.

3. Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2010), 42.

4. Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 18.

5. Ibid., 28, 29. Also see Walter C. Rucker, *The River Flows On: Black Resistance, Culture, and Identity Formation in Early America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), 126.

6. Barbara S. Glass, *African-American Dance: An Illustrated History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2007), 8.

7. Doris Green, "Traditional Dance in Africa," in *African Dance: An Artistic, Historical, and Philosophical Inquiry*, ed. Kariamu Welsh Asante (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2002), 16.

8. Jacqui Malone, *Steppin' on the Blues: The Visible Rhythms of African-American Dance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 13.

9. Lynne Fauley Emery, *Black Dance: From 1619 to Today* (Pennington, NJ: Princeton Book, 1988), 94.

10. Many states and plantation owners feared that enslaved Africans would use drums to communicate with each other and as an aid in fostering rebellion. For more information, see John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 35–36.

11. Emery, *Black Dance*, 89–96.

12. Katrina Hazzard-Gordon, *Jookin': The Rise of Social Dance Formations in African-American Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 18.

13. Freddie Williams Evans, *Congo Square: African Roots in New Orleans* (New Orleans: University of Louisiana at Lafayette Press, 2011), 1.

14. Ibid., 89.

15. Harriett Lihs, *Appreciating Dance: A Guide to the World's Liveliest Art* (Pennington, NJ: Princeton Book, 2009), 81.

16. Robert Farris Thompson, "Dance and Culture, an Aesthetic of Cool," *African Forum* 2 (1966): 88.

17. Marshall and Jean Stearns, *Jazz Dance: The Story of American Vernacular Dance* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 14–15.

18. Katrina Hazzard-Gordon, "Dancing under the Lash: Sociocultural Disruption, Continuity, and Synthesis," in *African Dance*, ed. Kariamu Welsh Asante (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2002), 101-30; Katrina Hazzard-Gordon, *Jookin': The Rise of Social Dance Formations in African-American Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990); Jacqui Malone, *Steppin' on the Blues: The Visible Rhythms of African-American Dance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996); Kariamu Welsh Asante, "Commonalities in African Dance: An Aesthetic Foundation," in *African Culture: The Rhythms of Unity,* 3rd ed., ed. Kariamu Welsh Asante and Molefi K. Asante (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1996); Kariamu Welsh Asante, *African Dance: An Artistic, Historical, and Philosophical Inquiry* (Trenton: African World Press, 1994); Kariamu Welsh Asante, *The African Aesthetic: Keeper of the Traditions* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993).

19. Stearns and Stearns, *Jazz Dance,* 29.

7

Jazz Dance from Emancipation to 1970

Jill Flanders Crosby and Michèle Moss

The history of jazz dance is intimately tied to the history of jazz music. Collectively, as jazz expression with common histories and shared aesthetic characteristics, their entwined history from emancipation to the 1970s is complex. Their parallel histories reveal a multiplicity of aesthetic approaches, interactions, and a fluidity of cultural, musical, and dance identities.[1] Imagine the jazz tree as it appears in the introduction surrounded by a community dancing socially and performatively. The groove that the participants, dancers, and musicians share is one that celebrates individual expression yet moves as a collective. There is a give and take, shift and change in aesthetic intention that honors the roots of the tree, celebrating the heritage and legacy of jazz while new branches form as a result of new innovations. These innovations reveal a history of jazz expression where the essence of jazz is one of experimentation and discovery,[2] embracing and absorbing various influences while holding individualistic expression and freedom in high regard. Thus jazz history is a landscape of evolving meanings, values, ideas, sounds, movements, contestations, contradictions, pluralities, and multiple constructions of "what is jazz."[3]

In this chapter, the historical discussion of jazz and its West African roots is framed by an examination of relevant jazz dance and music history literature as well as oral history interviews. This discussion and analysis offers a broad historical overview intended to introduce the sweep of jazz dance and music history.

Setting the Stage

"Jazz is a physical and aural expression of the complexity and exuberance of American culture and history."[4] Jazz dance and music emerged primarily from what is known as African-American folk and vernacular[5] music and dance, lending creative inspiration to each other's development.[6] These early dances incorporated improvisation and reflected "the power of the community supporting the individual creative voice in a non-literal expression of storytelling and connection to the human experience."[7] A competitive spirit often imbued these early forms, and movements were characterized by a weighted release into gravity, a dynamic spine, propulsive rhythms, and a rhythmic, conversational approach to musical accompaniment.[8]

From the 1850s into the twentieth century, presentational performance opportunities and venues for African-American musicians and dancers increased and dance troupes such as the Whitman Sisters (1900–1943) became incubators of dancing talent.[9] In medicine shows, tent shows, minstrelsy, vaudeville, gillies,[10] and eventually the musical theater stage, movement details of African-American folk and vernacular dances were reemerging in new dances, or in dances once seen only on plantations, retaining their original form while expanding through movement invention.[11] The Cakewalk, performed to the syncopated rhythms of the emerging ragtime music in the 1890s, was one of the earlier dances that served as an incubator for inventive new steps.[12] In July 1898, *Clorindy, or The Origin of the Cakewalk* opened on Broadway featuring the Cakewalk performed to ragtime music.[13]

Varied dance and music practices were also meeting each other in the cultural diversity of America where new ideas were explored. For example, William Henry Lane, known as Master Juba, lived in the Five Points district of New York City where Irish immigrants and African-Americans lived in the mid-1800s. He enlivened the rhythmic structure of the Irish jig with shuffle and African rhythms, adding the element of swing to his dancing.[14]

Sand dances and early tap dances followed, where the dancer used sand on the floor and metal implements on shoes to create musical sounds and rhythms. Dances retained African-like movements and propulsive rhythms while assimilating the solo style of white dancers.[15] African-American vernacular dance became more syncopated, heading toward the swinging dance forms such as the Charleston and Lindy, which would be called early jazz dance.

Musically, in the mid- to late 1800s, two evolutions were occurring that are considered the direct precursors of jazz: the blues and ragtime. The blues

used devices such as blue notes (notes said to fall "somewhere between the cracks of the piano"), slurring, growls, call-and-response, and a loosening of the rhythmic structure of the melody line from direct correspondence with the basic downbeat, the strongest beat felt inside a musical bar. Ragtime began to deliberately throw syncopations against downbeats as a kind of counterpoint in equal standing with the downbeat.[16]

Jazz Arrives Swinging

Historians generally agree that jazz as a musical form was born in the early twentieth century, most likely in New Orleans. Around 1902, African-American folk and vernacular music began to swing through what is often called triple-based rhythm described as "hot" and "bluesy" with jagged rhythms and vocal humanlike sounds emitting from instruments.[17] Shortly thereafter, dance done to this new music would also be called jazz.[18]

African-American vernacular dance was also beginning to swing through rhythms such as the Buck and Wing and the Shuffle. Thanks to a social dance boom to the new jazz music around 1910, dance once seen primarily in after-hours joints or "jook houses" and brothels moved into ballrooms.[19] According to jazz dance historians Marshall and Jean Stearns, the lyrics of Perry Bradford's 1909 dance-song "The Bullfrog Hop" guided a listener on how to perform a dance with the phrase, "and do the Jazzbo Glide."[20] Group dance forms gave way to partner dances,[21] and animal dances such as the Turkey Trot and Bunny Hug became the rage along with the hip isolations of Snake Hips. The Texas Tommy emphasized the breakaway where couples broke close body contact but kept contact with both hands, improvising steps of their choice.[22]

"The heart and soul of jazz dance crystallized between the 1920s and 1940s."[23] The 1920s became known as the jazz age as this era embraced jazz music and its accompanying dance form with a passion. New dances were emerging from earlier African-American dances through experimentation, extension, and creative development. The Charleston, both a social and a theatrical stage dance, was highly syncopated and retained the patting of the knees with the hands crossing over each other from an earlier dance called Patting Juba.[24] Previous New York City–based theatrical shows such as *Darktown Follies* (1911) featured the Cakewalk, Ballin' the Jack, and the Texas Tommy and would serve as inspiration for future musicals.[25] However, it was the 1921 show *Shuffle Along* featuring the Charleston that brought Broadway revues embracing jazz music and dance in vogue, pushing jazz expression to the forefront in musical theater.[26] Jazz social dances of this era were serving

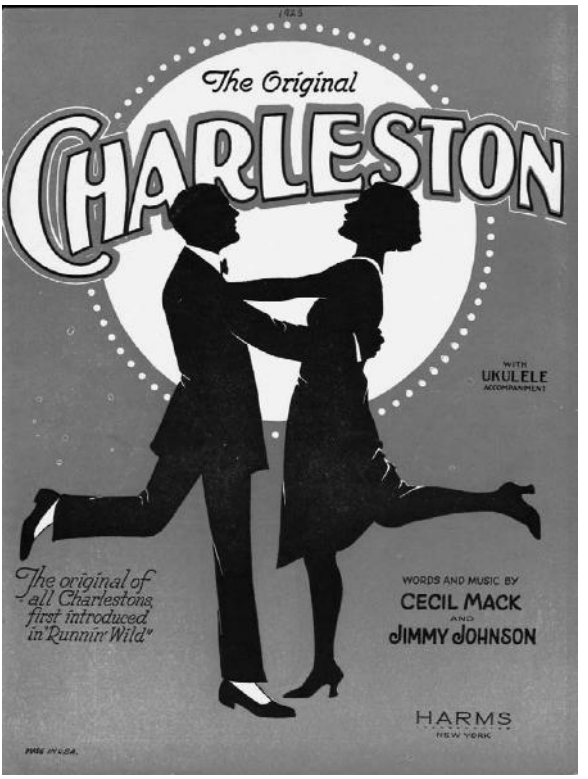

Figure 7.1. The Charleston, 1923. By permission of Tom Morgan.

as choreographic source material for stage performance while jazz tap, an evolution of early sand and tap dances, showed increased sophistication in its use of swing and complex rhythms.

Important musical innovations during this era include an increased emphasis on solo improvisation and a further coarsening of musical timbres and tones, strengthening the already voicelike quality of jazz music.[27] Jazz bands in the 1920s were developing greater ensemble rhythmic sophistication, and Duke Ellington was drawing on vernacular idioms for novel invention, "creating arrangements that left room for his players to contribute to the rhythmic conception of the piece."[28] Additionally, jazz drummers were building on rhythmic phrases created by jazz tappers.[29]

In the 1930s, jazz swing style music and jazz social dance were at their peak. Dances emphasized the swinging body in space, moving not only through the body's weighted and under-curve release in and through space but also through a propulsive, rhythmic conversation with the equally swinging and propulsive jazz music. Harlem in New York City was at the height of the Harlem Renaissance, and it was at the Savoy Ballroom on Lennox Avenue

between 140th and 141st Streets "where black musicians and dancers converged and defined a period: music and dance at the Savoy drew attention to the fact that the tradition of black music and dance forms were interrelated, and together were responsible for the swing phenomenon."[30]

At the Savoy Ballroom, the greatest jazz social dance of all time, the Lindy Hop, was born.[31] Norma Miller and Frankie Manning, legendary Lindy Hop dancers and members of Whitey's Lindy Hoppers, credit Twistmouth George as the creator of the Lindy at the Savoy when he threw his partner out into what is now called the "swing-out."[32] This is similar to the breakaway, but in the swing-out, couples not only break close body contact but also release one hand, allowing for more improvisation.

Legendary jazz orchestras and artists such as the Duke Ellington Orchestra, Fess Williams, Artie Shaw, Tommy Dorsey, Chick Webb, Dizzy Gillespie, and Cab Calloway were playing at the Savoy,[33] and their music fueled the creative energy that fed the development of new jazz social dances. In turn, the musicians were creatively influenced by the dancers' movements and rhythms.[34] Other jazz social dances and dance steps developed alongside

Figure 7.2. Whitey's Lindy Hoppers at the Savoy Ballroom. New York World's Fair 1939–1940 records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

the Lindy, such as the Big Apple, Shorty George, and Suzie Q, the majority of them Savoy-originated.[35] This new movement vocabulary continued the trend of serving as source material for experimentation and innovation for social, theatrical, and future concert jazz dance forms.

On Broadway, African-American choreographer Buddy Bradley was going directly to jazz music for inspiration and jazz dance movement invention,[36] while jazz tap was gaining popularity in movies through the work of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, John Bubbles, Fred Astaire, the Nicholas Brothers, Jeni LeGon, and the Condos Brothers. Jazz tap artists Coles and Atkins and Buster Brown were traveling with big bands like Duke Ellington's on the vaudeville and club circuit and appearing at New York clubs such as the Cotton Club and the Apollo Theater. These artists contributed significantly to jazz through their own dance creations, movement style, and manner of rhythmic, conversational exchanges with musicians. For most of these jazz artists, creative movement ideas originated in the vernacular and social jazz dances, arose from the rhythmic impulse of swinging jazz music, and were embellished for the performance stage.[37]

A similar phenomenon was evolving with the Lindy Hop dancers. Professionals such as Whitey's Lindy Hoppers were performing in clubs, films, on Broadway, and in concert halls including Radio City Music Hall. The routines of these Lindy Hop groups embellished the Lindy with moves not generally seen on the social dance floor except at contests,[38] such as the aerial moves (throwing a partner in the air) that can be seen in the classic Lindy film sequence from *Hellzapoppin'* (1941). Frankie Manning is credited with the first Lindy aerial move around 1935 or 1936 and for creating ensemble dancing for the professional Lindy Hop dance teams, although individual couple dancing continued to coexist with ensemble dancing in performance.[39] Norma Miller credits Herbert "Whitey" White with creating the first choreographed Lindy routines, including the first for the performance stage.[40]

Mura Dehn, a Russian émigré, arrived in America in 1930 to study and research jazz dance and she focused on jazz in Harlem, particularly at the Savoy Ballroom. Subsequently, she founded the Academy of Jazz dedicated to the research, teaching, and performance of jazz dance. For Dehn, jazz dance could be seen in the current social dances, especially the Lindy Hop, and in the practices of the African-American tap dancers,[41] and classes at her Academy of Jazz included African primitive, improvisational, and early American jazz expression.[42] In Dehn's words, early American jazz expression was inclusive of "all interpretations of modern jazz that we are familiar with . . . ragtime, Charleston, truckin, swing, boogie-woogie."[43] Dehn would later create a landmark documentary, *The Spirit Moves* (1950), that captured

not only these early jazz traditions but jazz dance performed to the upcoming stylistic innovation in jazz music, bebop, by dancers such as Clarence "Scoby" Strohman, Jeff Asquiew, Leroy Appins, and Milton "Okay" Hayes.

Dehn was also a principal dancer in the 1930s with choreographer Roger Pryor Dodge. Dodge began writing about jazz music in the 1920s with one of his best-known articles appearing in the *Dancing Times*, an English review

Figure 7.3. Mura Dehn and Roger Pryor Dodge. *Dance Recital of Concert Jazz*, January 22, 1938. 92nd Street Y.M.H.A., New York. Roger Pryor Dodge Collection, courtesy of Pryor Dodge.

primarily focused on ballet. Entitled "Negro Jazz," Dodge's article argued that the term *jazz* was being used indiscriminately, ignoring the true nature of jazz expression. His fascination with jazz music led Dodge to create and perform dances to well-known jazz tunes such as "East St. Louis Toodle-Oo," "Black and Tan Fantasy," and "St. Louis Blues."[44]

Shifting Styles, Shifting Tastes

Swing began to decline, and the early 1940s saw the development of a new jazz music style called bebop. Propelling jazz music into the status of an art form, bebop retained a swing rhythm but was a more rhythmically complex sound, with rapid tempos and dissonant chords that provided a sharp contrast to swing.[45] Musicians such as Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk, and Charlie Parker began to jam together, experimenting with new ideas through improvisation. Max Roach and Kenny Clarke moved away from the traditional role of drummers as time keepers to a dialogic manner of accompaniment, "all of which made dancing to this music a somewhat precarious endeavor."[46] The big bands of the swing era were replaced with the soloist-centered combo, and many musicians wanted jazz music to stand on its own terms free of the obligation to the dancer.[47] Concurrently, there was a lag in social dance from 1945 to 1954, during which time a 20 percent tax on dance floors to support World War II closed down many ballrooms. Musicians then moved to smaller clubs.

Bebop had a significant impact on jazz dance. Although Lindy Hoppers at the Savoy were able to dance to "bebop-inflected swing,"[48] jazz, as heard in bebop, was no longer the popular culture music of the day as swing had been. Jazz as social dance music was being replaced by other musical forms such as Latin, rhythm and blues, rock 'n' roll, and funk, the latter two with rhythmic qualities that often stood in contrast to jazz music, in particular, a lack of swing. When the public returned to social dancing, they were dancing to these new rhythms.

One exception to the lack of large ballroom spaces was New York City's Palladium Ballroom at 53rd and Broadway (1948–1966). Here, Latin dances such as the Mambo and Cha Cha were danced in conversation with Latin bands led by legends such as Tito Puente. Influenced by Latin rhythms and music from Cuba, Dizzy Gillespie was also playing at the Palladium, experimenting with a sound that would be called Latin jazz. Latin dances themselves share aesthetic characteristics that are core to jazz dance, such as "a more dynamic and flexible spine, weight shifts propelled by core body movement often resulting in weight suspended between the feet, flexed knees, centrality of polyrhythms over body lines, and improvisation closely linked

Figure 7.4. Jimmy Slyde. Photo from Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

to musical structures."[49] This Latin trend remained critical to jazz music and would eventually influence concert jazz dance in the decades to come.

Social dance began to change rhythmic identity, and new dance forms emerged, especially rock 'n' roll dances, albeit from the legacy of the jazz social dances. However, several dancers continued to perform onstage to past and emerging jazz music. Frankie Manning experimented with his group, the Congaroo Dancers, alongside musicians such as Cab Calloway. Manning incorporated tap, Latin dance, and "jazz dances" while performing and choreographing dances inspired by the Lindy Hop.[50] Jazz tappers Jimmy Slyde, Baby Laurence, and Buster Brown actively explored performance to bebop music, with Laurence moving rhythms from his feet up, "playing his body like a percussion instrument."[51] Talley Beatty, who trained with Katherine Dunham, collaborated with Duke Ellington in the 1950s and 1960s, creating choreography for several of Ellington's longer works.[52]

At this same time, Broadway's taste began to shift from revue-style musicals embracing jazz dance to narrative musicals embracing modern dance and ballet.[53] This new emphasis, however, did not entirely leave jazz dance behind. Katherine Dunham was creating jazz dances for movie musicals such as *Cabin in the Sky* (1943) and the finale of *Stormy Weather* (1943), which also featured the Nicholas Brothers in one of their classic duets. The vibrancy of jazz dance influenced an innovation that would eventually be called theatrical jazz dance. This form, however, would begin to diverge from the development of jazz dance to date. Ballet choreographers such as George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins, Robbins in particular as seen in *West Side Story*, experimented by merging the jazz idiom with a ballet base, shifting the focus from rhythm to line and space.[54] Broadway choreographers often turned to forms of music other than the rhythmically dense bebop, such as cool and symphonic jazz; music styles with differing rhythmic priorities also often stood in contrast to earlier swing-based jazz styles.[55]

During this transitional era, choreographers Jack Cole and Bob Fosse were integrating the dynamics of jazz inside their theater dance style for film and Broadway. Cole created his own style for nightclub performance, film, and stage with a goal to create a stylized form called theater dance that used syncopated rhythms.[56] Cole's 1947 *Sing, Sing, Sing*, to a Benny Goodman recording, is described as a mixture of African-American social dance forms (particularly the Lindy/Jitterbug)[57] with modern dance and East Indian dance technique "danced to the rhythms of swing and the tempos of bop."[58] *Sing, Sing, Sing's* innovative style, identified at that time as "modern jazz dance," was a sensation and would soon be emulated by choreographers for stage, film, and television,[59] especially on the popular TV variety shows hosted by Perry Como, Jackie Gleason, and Ed Sullivan.

Inspired by Cole, choreographers and teachers were grappling with how to teach this new style in the classroom under the name *jazz*,[60] while they were extending jazz dance into alternate directions merging jazz sensibility with their ballet and modern dance training. As fusion, rock 'n' roll, disco, and funk music became the popular culture music of the day, dance called jazz adopted these music styles with a passion, whether in the classroom, on Broadway, or in film. A catalyst for this occurred when Bob Fosse wedded jazzlike dance to rock 'n' roll style music first in *Sweet Charity* (1966) and then in *Pippin* (1972).[61]

Conclusion

As more and more classes called jazz dance began to appear in studios around the country and Europe, choreographers, teachers, and dancers continued

experimenting, asking, "What is jazz dance?"[62] An examination of the literature written from the 1950s and forward into the 1980s reveals distinct conceptualizations concerning jazz dance and its aesthetic core as new innovations called jazz were emerging. On one hand, writers and practitioners argued that jazz is rooted in West African and African-American practices. They identified innovators who hailed back to the turn of the century and included dancers Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, John Bubbles, Buster Brown, Nicholas Brothers, Condos Brothers, Fred Astaire, jazz social dancers of the Savoy Ballroom, and the concert stage Lindy Hoppers. Jazz dance, they argued, is shaped by the dancer's conversational relationship to music, wherein the dancer is often considered a musician. Creative ideas and movements arise from jazz music structure and its rhythmic impulse, particularly music that swings. In this approach to jazz dance (identified as rhythm-generated in this book), movement and motional qualities are strongly rooted in the West African forms and the African-American jazz social dance practices that emphasize a weighted and swinging body. Improvisation is creation in the moment of performance, and jazz dance is performed to jazz music and jazz rhythms.[63]

On the other hand, different writers and practitioners discussed the emergence of the new form of jazz that was then called modern jazz dance.[64] While a nod was often given to jazz's West African roots, the discussion shifted in focus to the fact that this new form of jazz came from the influence of Jack Cole and choreographers such as Jerome Robbins and Matt Mattox. Merging jazz styles with other genres such as ballet and modern, jazz then became a concert stage form (called theatrical jazz dance in this book). Identified innovators include jazz teachers Gus Giordano, Bob Fosse, and Luigi. Many choreographers who practiced this jazz style and were interviewed about this new form located the essence of jazz in its energy and emotion. They emphasized visual shapes that belonged to jazz including positions and stylistic walks. Improvisation was evidenced by personal nuance and in the fact that jazz draws from many sources; therefore, jazz is constantly changing, further evidence of its improvisational personality. Finally, they argued, jazz music is not necessary for the performance of jazz dance. In fact, by using music other than jazz and by embracing ballet and modern dance techniques, restrictions were lifted, allowing new innovations in jazz dance technique.[65]

In 1959, Marshall Stearns commented that jazz dancers and choreographers were losing the excitement and a particular way of shaping jazz dance. Could it be, he asked, that jazz dancers were ignoring jazz rhythms?[66] Further, when asked in an interview about the new form of "modern jazz dance,"

Cole said he did not wish to take credit for the movement.[67] To call his dance modern jazz was a distortion of his style. His choreographic concern was not with jazz dance at all but with his stylized form of theater dance using syncopated rhythms. Real jazz dancing, he said, could be found in the dance halls in the 1920s and 1930s, and in the social dances like the Camel Walk, the Charleston, and the Lindy. Moreover, he felt that what was called jazz dance at the time of the interview was "closer in style to 'pop' music than to jazz."[68] The jazz tree was now besieged by the give and take, shift and change in aesthetic intention between its roots and innovations. So where was jazz to go, and what was it going to do?

Jazz has been seen as a music and dance style, as a technique, and as an attitude.[69] The very nature of jazz as a way of making music and dance has allowed for various ideas about the identity of jazz to be and continue to be constructed.[70] Today there are multiple styles of dance called jazz that embrace, to various degrees, fundamental qualities associated with jazz expression. The word *jazz* remains complicated, highly contested, and often undefined. But more than anything, the defining characteristics of jazz dance remain experimentation and diversity.

Notes

1. David Ake, *Jazz Cultures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 41.

2. George Lewis, "Experimental Music in Black and White: The AACM in New York, 1970–1985," in *New Jazz Studies,* ed. Robert G. O'Meally, Brent Hayes Edwards, and Jasmine Farah Griffin (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 79–80.

3. Ake, *Jazz Cultures*, 2; David Ake, Charles Hiroshi Garrett, and Daniel Goldmark, *Jazz/Not Jazz: The Music and Its Boundaries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 1–10.

4. "Jazz Dance," *The Grove Dictionary of American Music,* 2nd ed., ed. Charles Hiroshi Garrett (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

5. The authors take the point of view that vernacular is not meant to be seen as "less" than other forms such as ballet and thus devoid of technique. Rather, vernacular stands as equally valuable as all other forms, styles, and techniques of dance.

6. Barbara Englebrecht, "Swinging at the Savoy," *Dance Research Journal* 15, no. 2 (Spring 1983): 4; Marshall and Jean Stearns, *Jazz Dance: The Story of American Vernacular Dance* (New York: Macmillan, 1968).

7. "Jazz Dance," *Grove Dictionary.*

8. Stearns and Stearns, *Jazz Dance,* 32.

9. Ibid, 85.

10. Gillies were traveling song and dance shows associated with carnivals in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

11. Stearns and Stearns, *Jazz Dance,* 25–84; Jill Flanders Crosby, "Will the Real Jazz Dance Please Stand Up? A Critical Examination of the Roots and Essence of Jazz with Implications for Education" (EdD diss., Teachers College, Columbia University, 1995), 102.

12. "Jazz Dance," *Grove Dictionary*.

13. Stearns and Stearns, *Jazz Dance*, 118–20.

14. Ibid, 44; Billy Siegenfeld interview, New York City, 1992.

15. Stearns and Stearns, *Jazz Dance*, 37.

16. Siegenfeld interview; Bob Boross, "Image of Perfection: The Free Style Dance of Matt Mattox" (MA thesis, Gallatin Division, New York University, 1994), 27.

17. James Lincoln Collier, *The Making of Jazz: A Comprehensive History* (New York: Doubleday, 1979), 57–71.

18. According to Porter, the name *jazz* was contested. Some musicians, he states, regarded jazz as a derogatory term (insinuating pop culture) rather than as an elevation of the development of African-American folk music forms. Eric Porter, *What Is This Thing Called Jazz*? (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 11–18.

19. Katrina Hazzard-Gordon, *Jookin': The Rise of Social Dance Formations in African-American Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 121–34.

20. Stearns and Stearns, *Jazz Dance*, 104.

21. Hazzard-Gordon, *Jookin*,' 81.

22. Stearns and Stearns, *Jazz Dance*, 129.

23. "Jazz Dance," *Grove Dictionary*.

24. Stearns and Stearns, *Jazz Dance*, 29.

25. Boross, "Image of Perfection," 28–29.

26. Stearns and Stearns, *Jazz Dance*, 122.

27. Porter, *What is This Thing Called Jazz?* 32.

28. Ibid, 37.

29. Stearns and Stearns, *Jazz Dance*, 140.

30. Englebrecht, "Swinging at the Savoy," 4.

31. Smithsonian Institution, *Jazz Oral History Project: Frankie Manning,* audiotape; Smithsonian Institution, *Jazz Oral History Project: Norma Miller,* audiotape.

32. Smithsonian Institution, *Manning* and *Miller* audiotapes.

33. Smithsonian Institution, *Manning,* audiotape.

34. Katherine Kramer interview, Saugerties, NY, 1995.

35. Smithsonian Institution, *Manning, Miller*.

36. Stearns and Stearns, *Jazz Dance*, 160–69.

37. Crosby, *Will the Real Jazz*, 120–22.

38. Smithsonian Institution, *Manning*.

39. Ibid.

40. Smithsonian Institution, *Miller*.

41. Mura Dehn, Papers on African-American Social Dancing ca. 1869–1987. New York Public Library Dance Collection, 1991.

42. "Jazz: A Folk Dance," *Dance Magazine* 19 (8) (1945): 8.

43. Ibid.

44. Pryor Dodge, "Hot Jazz and Jazz Dance," http://www.pryordodge.com, accessed February 23, 2013.

45. Crosby, *Will the Real Jazz*, 124; Porter, *What Is This Thing Called Jazz*, 54; Constance Valis Hill, "From Bharata Natyam to Bop," *Dance Research Journal* 33, no. 2 (Winter 2001): 29–39.

46. Ake, *Jazz Cultures*, 53.

47. Porter, *What Is This Thing Called Jazz*, 54–100.

48. Hill, "From Bharata Natyam to Bop." Valis Hill comments that to dance to the faster bebop rhythms, "dancers slowed their tempos to halftime, absorbing into their undulating bodies the percussions formerly reserved for the feet," 30.

49. Juliet McMains, "Dancing Latin/Latin Dancing: Salsa and DanceSport," in *Ballroom, Boogie, Shimmy Sham, Shake: A Social and Popular Dance Reader*, ed. Julie Malnig, 302–22 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 304.

50. Smithsonian Institution, *Manning.*

51. Hill, "From Bharata Natyam to Bop," 30; Smithsonian Institution, *Jazz Oral History Project: Jimmy Slyde*, audiotape; Buster Brown interview, New York City, 1993.

52. PBS, "Free to Dance, Biographies, Talley Beatty," http://www.pbs.org/wnet/freetodance/biographies/beatty.html.

53. Crosby, *Will the Real Jazz*, 130–31.

54. Ibid, 129–32.

55. Ibid.

56. Clayton Cole, "It's Gone Silly," in *Anthology of American Jazz Dance*, ed. Gus Giordano (Evanston, IL: Orion, 1975), 73.

57. Terry Monaghan, "Introducing Jazz, Jump & Jive." *Authentic Jazz Dance Journal,* 1(1988): 11-13. The terms Lindy Hop and Jitterbug are often used synonymously. Research by Terry Monaghan reveals that Lindy was sometimes the name of a step within the dance, and sometimes the name of the dance itself. He argues that African-American dancers Lindy Hopped while white imitators Jitterbugged. After World War II the words become almost interchangeable.

58. Hill, "From Bharata Natyam to Bop," 31.

59. Ibid.

60. Boross, "The Image of Perfection," 38–39.

61. Billy Siegenfeld interview, New York City, 1995.

62. Boross, "The Image of Perfection," 38–39.

63. Crosby, *Will the Real Jazz*, 51–90.

64. Ibid., 59–65.

65. Ibid.

66. Stearns, "Is Modern Jazz Dance Hopelessly Square," Dance Magazine, 1959.

67. Cole, "It's Gone Silly," 73.

68. Ibid.

69. Porter, *What Is This Thing Called Jazz*, xv; Crosby, *Will the Real Jazz*, 68–69, 319.

70. Ake, Garret, and Goldmark, *Jazz/Not Jazz*, 1–10.

8

Jazz Dance from 1970 into the Twenty-First Century

Jill Flanders Crosby and Michèle Moss

As dancers from the 1970s to the present, our bodies tried on many styles called jazz in the classroom and in performance that told us multiple and sometimes divergent stories. As audience members at many musicals employing "jazz" dance and at jazz concert dance performances, we experienced the same: multiple and divergent jazz stories. Jazz continues experimenting and innovating, blending and fusing, and in its wake, leaving contestations and contradictions.

Jazz music has a parallel story. Musicians such as Miles Davis continued the jazz practice of blending and fusing, keeping one foot rooted in tradition while keeping an eye on the new and the inventive, although receiving criticism for straying beyond the edges of jazz.[1] Other musicians such as Wynton Marsalis have caused fervent debates about what is jazz.[2] These outer edges of the genre seem curiously unpredictable and irregular, but they were and are jazz nonetheless.

Over time it became obvious that the genesis for jazz dance and music, the fusing of West African rhythms and movement roots and European influences, would be retained by some and released by others. What remained central was its changing nature, an evolving form that was a reflection of the day. Ultimately each decade from the 1970s on would be distinct, yet some core aspects remained if only by hints and shadows: rhythmic movement, pelvic movement, elements of its social dance beginnings, entertainment, and vast artistic explorations.

In this chapter we will discuss these multiple jazz stories. The thematic lenses we use will include experimentation in jazz dance and music, jazz as a social, theatrical, and concert dance form, revival movements, and jazz dance in the studios. This approach is based on the idea that each lens looks back into the others; social dance forms influenced what was on the concert and theatrical stage, and the stage influenced social dance forms and what was taught in the studios. Concurrently, of course, what was taught and innovated in the studios influenced social dance and dance on the theatrical and concert stage.

Jazz Dance Continues Experimenting and Developing

The decades following the 1960s were a time of change. Experimentation flourished as jazz dance and music continued to evolve. The radiation of jazz outward from its origins embraced many new styles, absorbing or being absorbed and thus changing the nature of jazz. Broadway, film, and television were bringing more attention to jazz music and dance. Many jazz artists were not sure where jazz would go, and a new era was introduced with many voices and dancing bodies on many continents. The jazz tree now had strong roots, and branches were flourishing: a Swedish swing dance revival, Japanese hip-hop culture, British club jazz/funk competitions, and a Chicago house dance scene. Different music trends had people social dancing to new styles of music, producing new dance trends. Jazz revival movements inspired new examinations of past jazz trends, concert jazz dance companies were flourishing, and jazz classes were named after various styles and fusions: Broadway jazz, jazz funk, authentic jazz, modern jazz, street jazz, theatrical jazz, and concert jazz, to name a few. Some jazz teachers were fusing ballet and modern dance into the jazz blend using all forms of music, while others preferred jazz dance's vernacular roots and an attachment to swing rhythms.

Urban and Social Dance Styles Lend Their Persuasion

Elvis Presley inspired a generation of social dancers with his gyrating hips; his style was a borrowed continuum of the African-American aesthetic. Jazz social dance was reinvented as rock 'n' roll dance. Motown, funk, and disco music styles followed, and so did America's social dancing. Cholly Atkins, of the tap dance duo Coles and Atkins, was now actively choreographing for Motown performers. Disco was part of the jazz dance spectrum, for dancers were dancing in a "jazz way,"[3] and all these new styles were infiltrating Hollywood in movies such as *Flash Dance* (1983) and *Beat Street* (1984).

The 1980s was a particularly interesting time for jazz dance when seen through the social dance lens. The improvisatory practice important to early jazz dance and much of jazz music could be found in hip-hop culture, principally the urban social dances or "party dances." Dance scholar Halifu Osumare argues that the hip-hop aesthetic of Rennie Harris, director and founder of Puremovement, a hip-hop dance theater company, is an aspect of the evolutionary spectrum of jazz and the Africanist continuum.[4] Jazz could indeed be seen in many of the urban dance styles of the 1980s and 1990s. Jazz could be identified in the "performance of attitude," in the "aesthetic of the cool," the "looking smart," and indeed all aspects of the competitive spirit that had dancers "laying it down" or "turning it out."[5] The Bronx "hooky sets," when young people skipped school to hang out, were impromptu opportunities not only to date but also to show your stuff, to battle, and to compete in much the same way as the Savoy Ballroom challenges. Discothèques, park jams, block parties, and gang-hosted dance sessions on vacant lots or basketball courts always celebrated personal style,[6] an aspect that is part of the jazz legacy.

A resurgence in Latin jazz and the development of Latin rhythms came in the 1970s and continues to this day.[7] The popularity of the sounds and movements of Salsa, essentially an evolution of the Cuban Son, was felt and seen on social dance floors internationally.[8] Later on, tap dancers such as Katherine Kramer and Max Pollack started translating complex Latin musical rhythms into their feet as a new branch of their performance aesthetic.

Revival Movements

The popularity of jazz tap (also known as rhythm tap) declined somewhat in the 1950s. However, in the 1960s, Marshall Stearns was instrumental in bringing jazz tappers back onto the stage at the Newport Jazz Festival.[9] By the 1970s, tap dancers such as Dianne Walker, Brenda Bufalino, Jane Goldberg, and Katherine Kramer "were all on synchronic missions to breathe life back into" the legendary hoofers and virtuosos of tap.[10] These artists performed with tap masters so that the art of jazz tap would not be lost, while standing on the shoulders of the previous generation. They were popular performers and teachers holding down the rhythm-generated approach by dancing to jazz music.

In the 1980s, Frankie Manning, who had been out of the spotlight and working at the post office for forty years, found himself courted by dancers from the West Coast interested in the Savoy-style Lindy Hop. Manning returned to the spotlight, and the Lindy Hop revival was a West Coast

inspiration and an East Coast phenomenon. Meanwhile, in London, the Jiving Lindy Hoppers under the direction of Terry Monaghan were enjoying critical acclaim performing jazz social dances and rock 'n' roll dances.

Theatrical and Concert Jazz Dance

Dance in Broadway musicals continued to defy easy categorization under the banner of theatrical jazz dance. Bob Fosse influenced theatrical jazz dance with his distinctive style. Dance in Broadway musicals such as *Cats* (1982) and *A Chorus Line* (1975) had a strong ballet and modern base and worked with show tune musical styles. Other Broadway musicals such as *Sophisticated Ladies* (1981) and *Black and Blue* (1989) had a closer connection to the roots of jazz dance. Choreographers for these latter musicals included jazz legends such as Donald MacKayle, Henry LeTang, and Frankie Manning, who all brought their knowledge of jazz dance from earlier generations back to the contemporary Broadway stage.

Concert jazz companies were flourishing in various locations around North America, such as Danny Buraczeski's JAZZDANCE company, located first in New York City (1979) and later in Minneapolis.[11] The Canadian company Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal (BJM) was serving up a fusion of ballet technique and jazz shapes and toured extensively to concert stages around the world. Canadian tap dancer Heather Cornell founded Manhattan Tap and frequently collaborated with jazz musician Ray Brown. Both artists created new music and dance inspired by and in conversation with each other.[12]

Dancer and choreographer Dianne McIntyre brought her own movement vocabulary into collaborations with jazz musicians such as Cecile Taylor and Max Roach beginning in the 1970s.[13] Mickey Davidson, who worked with McIntyre's company Sounds in Motion, also worked with Norma Miller's Lindy Hoppers as well as with Cecile Taylor and jazz musician Sun Ra. Dedicated to exploring and performing the interlocking relationship between music and dance, Davidson continues to maintain Norma Miller's choreography with a company known as the Savoy Swingers.[14]

Jazz Dance in the Studios

The 1970s, '80s, and '90s were a vital but complex time in jazz dance education. Teachers and practitioners were using popular music such as rock and funk, yet they taught under the banner of "jazz." The order of the day seemed to have most labeling the work generically or with descriptors. What was jazz dance, and could it be separated from jazz music and still be called jazz dance? Some teachers argued yes; others argued no. Several teachers codified

Figure 8.1. JAZZDANCE. Dancers: Jane Blount and Robert Smith, 1987. Photo by Jack Mitchell. By permission of Danny Buraczeski.

their individual technique so that the form could be studied, mastered, and taught by multiple teachers.

New York City classes were led by names such as Luigi, Chuck Kelley, Phil Black, Frank Hatchett, Fred Benjamin, Nat Horne, and Lynn Simonson, all experimenting with what is jazz and how to teach it. Many classes adopted the popular culture music of the era and focused on line, shape, set choreography, and the addition of ballet and modern dance aesthetics. Lynn Simonson, creator of the Simonson jazz technique, worked more often with jazz music and incorporated elements of improvisation during class.

Pepsi Bethel taught in New York City for many years; he identified his work as "authentic jazz" and held to no certified training system other than the one he had lived.[15] Bethel began his campaign for the preservation of authentic jazz dance forms in the early 1960s, ultimately establishing Pepsi Bethel's Authentic Jazz Dance Theater in 1971. He taught well into the 1980s, and he remained dedicated to the jazz idiom as a reflection and expression of his life force.[16]

Other New York City–based jazz artists in the 1980s included Jo Jo Smith and Betsy Haug.[17] Smith's class used multiple genres of popular culture music. He emphasized "training with a musicality." To match the "feel" of combinations to the "feel" of the music, he harnessed traditional jazz lines and pulled from his early Afro-American and Latino music and dance influences.[18] Haug's style was influenced by Latin rhythms and the social dances born of African-American culture.[19] Although very familiar with the Broadway jazz style, Haug was dedicated to musicality that required discovering a personal soulfulness and connecting the dancer to the feeling of the music.[20]

In the 1980s and '90s, jazz dance classes could be found around the world. European classes were similar to those in North America, as many American nationals had emigrated and were teaching jazz dance abroad. Some had a social dance approach, mostly referencing the swing era, teaching Lindy Hop, Balboa, or boogie-woogie. New York septuagenarian John Clancy is credited with being the first swing camp instructor at the now famous Herräng Dance Camp in Sweden. Matt Mattox taught in Europe and America while he was based in France. Calling his jazz free style, he worked in a concert/theatrical style that started in the 1970s and continued into the 2000s. Gus Giordano, founder of Giordano Dance Chicago (1963), began the Jazz Dance World Congress (1990), dedicated to exploring jazz dance history and its future through classes and seminars. Danny Buraczeski offered a symposium on teaching jazz dance at Southern Methodist University in Dallas in June 2012. All in all, the many exponents of jazz dance held to many definitions and descriptions of the idiom.

Jazz and the Spirit of Change

From Manhattan to strip malls around North America, studio jazz dance classes continue to be represented by varied styles often distinct from the aesthetic essences of early jazz dance and music. Since jazz has always been known as a form that was born of and allowed for fusion, this makes perfect sense. Jazz music and dance are often an aural and visual reflection or snapshot of the times, ever changing and evolving. There are many jazz techniques thriving locally and internationally as they are codified and then widely disseminated through organizations and associations that hold conferences and workshops or have exam-oriented syllabi.

Examples of these varied styles can be seen in diverse companies. Two examples of concert companies holding down a deep commitment to jazz music and dance are Jump Rhythm Jazz Project and Decidedly Jazz Danceworks. Jump Rhythm Jazz Project was formed in 1990 in New York City by Billy Siegenfeld, and it relocated to Chicago in 1993. The company focuses on

Figure 8.2. Decidedly Jazz Danceworks. Dancers: Ivan Nunez Segui, Dinou Marlett Stuart, and Sarisa F de Toledo, 2012. Photo by Trudie Lee. By permission of Decidedly Jazz Danceworks.

transforming jazz or jazz-based rhythms into a body music that makes both the musical accents and dynamic feel of those rhythms visible.[21] Decidedly Jazz Danceworks was founded by Vicki Willis, Hannah Stilwell, and Michèle Moss in 1984 in Calgary, Canada.[22] "The core aesthetic of DJD's work is African-rooted and swing-based with jazz music at its heart." They often use live music for their performances.[23] The company runs a large dance school in addition to its performing company. Such companies view jazz dance and jazz music as equal, conversational partners in the creative process and in performance. Movement begins from within a vernacular body that releases into gravity and emphasizes movement initiated from the inside out.

Examples of concert companies with a theatrical jazz dance aesthetic include River North Dance Chicago and Odyssey Dance Theatre. River North has been performing nationally and internationally since 1989 under the artistic direction of Frank Chaves. The company is committed to the presentation and preservation of jazz-based contemporary dance, and it boasts a diverse repertoire.[24] Odyssey Dance Theatre of Salt Lake City and now in its

Figure 8.3. River North Dance Chicago. Hanna Bricston and Michael Gross in *Simply Miles, Simply Us* by artistic director Frank Chaves, 2011. Photo by Jennifer Girard. By permission of River North Dance Chicago.

eighteenth year is founded and directed by Derryl Yeager. Its dancing combines ballet, jazz, modern, hip-hop, tap, ballroom, Broadway, and vaudeville in a hybrid form.[25] The aesthetic essence of theatrical jazz dance companies, including but not limited to River North and Odyssey, lies in the fact that jazz is a highly stylized reflection of the individual. Movement is characterized by a strong, powerful, and placed body; the dancer uses placement not unlike ballet but different in its grounded relationship to space, its driving quality through the pelvis, its outstretched and energetic port de bras, and its asymmetry. Here artists often form alliances with varied music styles rather than with jazz music alone. Regardless, they retain the "aesthetic of the cool" present among jazz dance styles.[26]

Conclusion

To understand the diversity of jazz dance expression today is daunting. From a roots-grounded approach to bold innovations and everything in between is a rich assortment of possibilities, options, and hybrids. When considering

the range from social dance to concert work, from jazz dancing tied to jazz music to jazz dancing that allows contemporary music, jazz dance represents a multiplicity of options engendered by the hundred-plus years of jazz dancing that have gone by. Jazz music is no different. Some support the "classical" jazz music style that adheres to techniques laid down by generations of jazz musicians while simultaneously critiquing other jazz styles that have "strayed" too far from the center of standard jazz forms.[27] Others argue that jazz as a coherent trend and even as a definition was out of date by the 1980s, commenting that jazz is not a technique but an attitude, thus elevating hip-hop as the "new jazz."[28]

Every decade of jazz seems a restless age. Originally an expression of African-American culture, it has proven to be a compelling art form and an expressive mode for many people and cultures around the world. It is by nature innovative, always moving and changing. Its many dance variations range from one with an intimate interrelationship between sound and movement to a "feeling the music" approach resulting in an expressive, emotive, and playful display. Some characteristics of jazz expression do seem contradictory, as many of the essences are incongruous, paradoxical, and diverse. But this makes the history of jazz interesting. In the history of jazz expression, many of the characteristics seem to build on the past while some movements seem like sharp, left-hand turns unrelated to the historical continuum. Born of a fusion, jazz is sophisticated and earthy, high flying and low to the ground. Jazz is of the blues and swing, funk and pop, and a whole lot of rhythm. It is alive and in motion around the world.

Notes

1. David Ake, *Jazz Cultures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 146–76; Eric Porter, *What Is This Thing Called Jazz*? (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 287–334.

2. Porter, *What Is This Thing,* 113, 125.

3. Tim Lawrence, "Beyond the Hustle: 1970s Social Dancing, Discotheque Culture, and the Emergence of the Contemporary Club Dancer," in *Ballroom, Boogie, Shimmy Sham, Shake,* ed. Julie Malnig (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 203.

4. Halifu Osumare, "The Dance Archaeology of Rennie Harris: Hip-Hop or Postmodern?" in *Ballroom, Boogie, Shimmy Sham, Shake,* 263.

5. Yvonne Daniel, "Cuban Dance: An Orchard of Caribbean Creativity," in *Caribbean Dance from Abakuá to Zouk: How Movement Shapes Identity,* ed. Susanna Sloat (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 41; Brenda Dixon Gottschild, "Crossroads, Continuities and Contradictions: Afro-Euro-Caribbean Triangle," in *Caribbean Dance from Abakuá to Zouk: How Movement Shapes Identity*, ed. Susanna Sloat (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 4; Jacqui Malone, *Steppin' on the Blues: The Visible Rhythms of African-American Dance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 18. Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash*

of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy (New York: Random House, 1983), 11–13. We build on the work of these authors who discuss African retentions and the mystic coolness (itutu) of Yoruba and Kongo/Angola traditions and their influence in the Americas. This "cool face" (tu l'oju) and performance attitude combines vitality with composure. This aesthetic references a continuum of West African dance practices throughout the Americas including jazz dance. The attitude on the early funk, soul, and hip-hop social dance floor, all a continuum of jazz dance, is often referred to in the vernacular or colloquial language as "getting down," "turning it out," or "layin' it down." This describes a movement stance that references West African stylizations with a costume that is purposely dapper and "smart."

6. Mr. Wiggles (Steffan Clemente), second-generation B-Boy member of Rock Steady Crew (RSC) and The Electric Boogaloos, informal lecture, September 2011 at Pulse Studios in Calgary, Alberta; Ken Swift, recognized pioneer and original member of RSC, telephone interview, October 2007.

7. David García, "Embodying Music/Disciplining Dance: The Mambo Body in Havana and New York City," in *Ballroom, Boogie, Shimmy Sham, Shake*, 170; Tim Wall, "Rocking Around the Clock," In *Ballroom, Boogie, Shimmy Sham, Shake*, 187; Juliet McMains, "Dancing Latin/Latin Dancing: Salsa and DanceSport," in *Ballroom, Boogie, Shimmy Sham, Shake*, 317–18.

8. Daniel, "Cuban Dance: An Orchard," 45.

9. Jill Flanders Crosby, "Will the Real Jazz Dance Please Stand Up? A Critical Examination of the Roots and Essence of Jazz with Implications for Education" (EdD diss., Teachers College, Columbia University, 1995), 135.

10. Katherine Kramer, "The Resurgence of Tap" (master's thesis, Wesleyan University, 1994), 21.

11. http://depts.washington.edu/uwdance/cdc/archive/repertoire.php?t=chor&id=41.

12. Heather Cornell conversation with Jill Flanders Crosby, 1997, New York City.

13. See www.diannemcintyre.com.

14. See www.swingsistah.com/index.php?id=21; www.traditionintap.org/Faculty/Mickey_Davidson/index.html.

15. Alan Davage interviews, November 2011 and February 2012.

16. Ibid.

17. Jo Jo's Dance Factory, created and co-directed by Jo Jo Smith and Sue Samuels in the 1960s, became the popular New York City dance school Broadway Dance Center in 1984.

18. Michèle Moss field notes, 1981; Sue Samuels e-mail, May 14, 2012.

19. Vicki Willis interview, October/November 2011.

20. Ibid.

21. Billy Siegenfeld e-mail, April, 2012.

22. Kathi Sundstrom e-mail, March, 2012.

23. http://www.decidedlyjazz.com/discover/the-company/vision.

24. http://www.rivernorthchicago.com/about.asp

25. http://www.jazzdanceworldcongress.org/index.php?tray=content&catalogID=134.

26. Lindsay Guarino e-mail, May 4, 2012.

27. Rickey Vincent, *Funk: The Music, the People, and the Rhythm of the One* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin Press, 1996), 149.

28. Ibid.

9

Historical Movement Chart

Tom Ralabate

Following are lists of jazz walks, steps, and jazz movements in a historical context. These lists and terms are divided into specific eras and are specific to American culture. Each heading also contains musical styles that were dominant during that era. Familiarity with these terms allows for practical and technical application; understanding the time, place, and character of these jazz vernacular terms will enhance creative interpretation. This list is by no means complete and will continually acquire new additions. Many movements overlap into other eras, giving truth to such statements as: "jazz is ever changing," "jazz dance redefines and reinvents itself," and "everything old is new again."

1800s–1920s Folk, Spirituals, Brass Band, Blues, Ragtime, Dixie

Black Bottom
Boogie
Buck and Wing
Bullfrog Hop
Buzz
Buzzard Lope
Cagney
Cakewalk
Castle Walk
Charleston
Clog
Cross Over
Eagle Rock
Eating Cherries
Essence
Falling Off the Log
Fox Trot
Freeze
French Twist
Gaze the Fog
Get It On
Grapevine
Grind
Hornpipe
Itch
Jazz & Flash Steps
Jazzbo Glide
Jig
Jump Back Jack
Jumping Jim Crow
Killing Time
Knee Jazz
Legomania

Let It Roll
Lindy—Syncopated Box
Mess Around
Mooche
Off to Buffalo
Over the Top
Patting Juba
Pecking
Picking Cherries
Pivot
Polka
Ring Shout
Rubberlegs
Sand
Scare Crow
Scissors
Shim Sham
Shimmy
Shuffle
Snake Hips
Soft-Shoe
Spank the Baby
Strut
Sugars
Tack Annie
Tango
Texas Tommy
Trenches
Turkey Trot
Varsity Drag
Virginia
Walk the Dog
Waltz Clog
Wings

1930s Boogie-Woogie, Big Bands, Swing, Blues, Jazz

Andrews Sisters, Shimmy
Around the World
Boogie-Woogie
Camel Walk
Crazy Legs
Flea Hop
Flick Kicks with ball change
Frankenstein
Hinge Walk
Jitterbug
Jive Walk
Kimbo
Lindy
Shorty George
Sugars
Suzie Q
Swing
Texas Tommy
Trucking

1940s Big Band, Bebop, Afro-Cuban, Latin Invasion

Boogie-Woogie movements continued
Calypso, Cuban
Conga
Merengue (Latin Social Dance Forms)
Samba

1950s Rhythm and Blues, Rock and Roll, Cool Jazz, Hard Bop

Bunny Hop
Cha Cha
Fly
Jitterbug
Locomotion
Mambo
Stroll
West Side Story Influence

1960s British Invasion, Brazilian Invasion, Soul, Motown

Alligator
Boogaloo
Bossa Nova
Dolphin (late 1960s)
Four Corners
Freddy
Frug
Hand Jive
Hully Gully

Jerk
Mashed Potato
Monkey
Pony
Shimmy Variations
(Swim, Shotgun, Hitchhike)
Temptation Walk
Tighten Up
Twist
Underdog
Watusi

1970s Popularized Music, Computerized, Salsa, Reggae, Fusion

Break-Dancing
Disco Walk
Funk Movement
Hustle (Latin Hustle)
Line Dances (Bus Stop)
Saturday Night Fever Influence

1980s Music Videos, Rap, Punk, Rhythm & Blues, Country and Western

Note: From the 1980s through today there is an overlap

Aerobic Dancing
Break-Dancing
(Beat Box Influence)
Hip-hop
Lambada
Lyrical Jazz
Michael Jackson Influence
Moon Walk
MTV Dancing
New Wave Movement
Punk Dancing
Rap

1990s–2000s Techno, Alternative, Hip-hop, Rap, Jazz Mix, Acid Jazz, Rave Trance, Rhythm & Blues, Country and Western

Alfa
A-Town Stomp
Boogaloo
Buddy
Butterfly
Chicken Noodle Soup
Corkscrew
Country Western Dances
Cupid Shuffle
Dime Stopping (Uncle Sam)
Electric Slide
Fila
Hammer Time
Harlem Shake
Hip-hop Bounce Walk
Humpty Hump
Lambada (Dirty Dancing)
Leo Walk
Line Dances
Macarena
Monastery
Music Video Influences
Pacing/Tagging
Patty Duke
Paula Abdul Influence
Rave Dancing
Robo Walk
Roger Rabbit
Running Man
Scooby Doo
Scootbot/Scoobop
Soulja Boy
Steve Martin
Ticking
Trance Dancing
Vogue
Waddle
Walk It Out
Which-a-ways
Wild Thing