

TAPCO

Vancouver Tap Dance Society

Teacher's Study Guide

ABOUT THE COMPANY

The Vancouver Tap Dance Society was founded in 1995 by Lana Caputi and Sas Selfjord for the purpose of promoting, preserving, and developing an awareness of the art form. The Society spearheads projects that promote tap dance to the public, delivers comprehensive training opportunities for dancers of all levels from novice to professional, and provides administration and infrastructure that will support all VTDS activities and programs. These activities include operating the Tap Academy located in East Vancouver, producing the annual Vancouver International Tap Festival, promoting a youth performance ensemble called



TapCo, and offering an outreach program that provides classes to hundreds of children each year. Hallmarks of VTDS include a pro-

fessional faculty, commitment to preserving the legacy of the tap masters, high profile performance opportunities, and promoting a culture of respect and passion for tap dance.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

As *Just in Time* explodes in tap rhythms, you learn about the legendary "Chair Dance" which was a time when there was little work for the masters and how they jammed and challenged each other in TapCo's opening number "The Hoofers Line". The dancers will expect you to hoot and holler with them as they perform the national anthem of tap, the "Shim Sham Shimmy" a dance learned by every tap dance enthusiast around the world. TapCo rocks the house with some funk and then they slow it down a bit with some good old soft shoe. Another routine in the performance is a body drumming routine – no taps, but creating sounds by snapping, slapping, patting and stamping, using the body as an instrument. A brief

demonstration on the basic rudiments of tap dance, shuffle, flap and stamp is integrated into the performance. Another feature is an all-boys group which aims at breaking down any stereotypes towards boys in dance.

With music that is current and immediately recognizable by today's young people, *Just in Time* will engage you in a rhythmic conversation that is based on precision, flawless execution and elegance. You are about to witness tap dancing at its best. Don't sit back and relax, get to the edge of your seat and take a couple of deep breaths and be ready to raise the roof!

You are just in time.

THEMES

- *Dance*
- *Movement*
- *Music*
- *Performance*
- *Phys Ed*
- *Popular Culture*
- *Rhythm*
- *Teamwork*

ABOUT THE ART FORM—A BRIEF HISTORY

Tap Dance is a style of American theatrical dance, distinguished by percussive footwork, which marks out precise rhythmic patterns on the floor. Some descriptive step names are *brush*, *flap*, *shuffle*, *ball change*, and *cramp roll*. The sources of tap dancing include the Irish solo step dance, the English clog dance, and African dance movements.



Dance and music have always been partners and at the turn of the century the blues, a new kind of music arose. It was born out of the Mississippi cotton fields, mixed with African work chants and Christian hymns. The rhythm of the blues spread across North America, integrating geographical influences contributing to jazz, ragtime and swing.



In the southern United States, various dance elements merged by the early 19th century into folk styles, the modern descendants of which include *buck-and-wing* dancing and *clogging*, both done in leather-sole shoes. These dances were adapted theatrically in the 1820s.

The *buck-and-wing* and *clogging* coalesced, and by the 1920s metal plates, or "taps", had been added to leather-soled shoes. In the '20s and '30s dancers contributed to the development of new styles, and dance teams became popular for their acrobatic, often satirical acts.



Jazz provided further rhythmic complexity, and Bill "Bojangles" Robinson became America's most famous tap dancer. The style was further expanded in the 1930s and 1940s, when dancers such as Fred Astaire, Paul Draper, Ray Bolger, and, in the late 1950s, Gene Kelly added movements from ballet and modern dance.

Today, tap dance is gaining new audiences by adapting to the times. Significantly, the American dancer Savion Glover has revolutionized the genre by including hip-hop rhythms and rap beats. Having initially become known for performances on Broadway and Sesame Street as a young actor, he achieved his greatest success in a Tony award winning performance in "Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk."



TAP DANCE STEPS—A BASIC LESSON

Below are three fundamental steps in tap dancing: the shuffle, ball change, and stamp. These are beginner steps and are easily mastered by anyone. At the bottom of the page is a very basic tap dance routine that incorporates these three steps. It is fun to both try the steps yourself and to see if you can spot them being used by the dancers in a show.

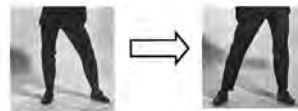
1. THE SHUFFLE

Brush your toe lightly forward and back on the floor in front of you.



2. THE BALL CHANGE

Simply shift your body weight from the ball of one foot to the other



3. THE STAMP

Stamp the full flat of the foot on the floor (not too hard—the taps will take care of making the sound!)



4. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Count	Foot	Action
1...	R	shuffle
2...	R > L	ball change
3... 4...	R	stamp
1...	L	shuffle
2...	L > R	ball change
3... 4...	L	stamp
1...	R	shuffle
2...	R > L	ball change
3... 4...	R	stamp
1...	L	shuffle
2...	L > R	ball change
3...	L	stamp
4...	R	stamp
1...	L	stamp



OUTREACH

Optional Mini Tap Dance Lesson for Schools

As an outreach objective, the Vancouver Tap Dance Society, at the request of the school, can follow the performance with a twenty-minute mini-lesson with a class of students. The company carries over 100 pairs of tap shoes of all sizes that are brought to the school which allows the students to wear the shoes, get a feel for the sound they make, and introduce them to a few basic steps of the art form.



HOSTING THE PERFORMANCE

The company will arrive at your school 30 to 60 minutes' ahead of the scheduled performance time. They will require exclusive use of the gym prior to the show and will set up on the gym floor at one end

requiring the full width of the gym and about 25' from the back wall. They will also need access to an electrical outlet, a changing room, and drinking water. The performance will last approximately 45

minutes and will be followed by a short question and answer session. Please have a staff member or student introduce the company and say a few words of thanks afterward.

RESOURCES

BOOKS

Tap!: The Greatest Tap Dance Stars And Their Stories, 1900-1955 by Rusty Frank

Brotherhood In Rhythm: The Jazz Tap Dancing of the Nicholas Brothers by Constance V Hill

Savion!: My Life in Tap by Savion Glover

Jazz Tap: From African Drums to American Feet by Anne E. Johnson

WEBSITES

www.tapdance.org

www.vancouvertapdance.bc.ca

CONTACT & TAP DANCE CLASSES

The company loves to receive students' drawings and teachers' feedback. Please send any pictures or comments to the following address: Vancouver Tap Dance Society, 2775 East Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC V5K 1Z8

The Vancouver Tap Dance Society offers classes in their East Vancouver studio for all ages, from beginner to advanced. For more information please visit the website

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