

# Decolonising Tap Dance: Resources for Further Learning

The following resources offer entry points for further learning. They reflect a range of voices and perspectives, and are intended to support ongoing exploration rather than provide a definitive history.

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## PODCASTS

- **Tap Love Tour Podcast:** Conversations with tap artists exploring training, lineage, and lived experience within the form.
- **Relative Rhythms Podcast:** A tap-focused podcast exploring rhythm, history, and connections across generations of dancers.
- **Lost in the Shuffle Podcast:** Interviews with tap dancers and musicians, offering insight into the cultural, musical, and personal journeys within tap dance.

## FILMS & DOCUMENTARIES

- **Uprooted: The Journey of Jazz Dance:** Explores the African diasporic roots of jazz dance and its development in the United States, offering important context for understanding tap within a wider cultural landscape.
- **By Word of Foot:** A documentary exploring tap dance lineage, oral transmission, and the passing of knowledge between generations of dancers.
- **No Maps on My Taps:** A landmark documentary featuring Chuck Green, Bunny Briggs, and Sandman Sims, offering first-hand insight into tap dance as a lived, improvisational, and culturally rooted practice.
- **About Tap – George T. Nierenberg (1985):** A documentary capturing performances and conversations with tap artists, offering insight into the artistry, musicality, and cultural context of the form.

# ARTICLES & ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Tap Dance Research Network UK:** <http://tdrnuk.com/>  
A UK-based network supporting research, dialogue, and knowledge-sharing around tap dance history, practice, and pedagogy.
- **American Tap Dance Foundation:** <https://www.atdf.org/>  
Educational programmes, archives, and initiatives supporting the preservation and development of tap dance, with a strong focus on history, training, and community engagement.
- **Library of Congress:** <https://www.loc.gov/>  
Digital archives and collections including material on tap dance, jazz, and African American performance history.

# BOOKS & FURTHER READING

These texts offer a range of historical, cultural, and practice-based perspectives to support deeper engagement with tap dance and its contexts.

- **Tap Dancing America: A Cultural History – Constance Valis Hill (2010)**  
A key text exploring the development of tap dance and the contributions of Black American artists.
- **Brotherhood in Rhythm: The Jazz Tap Dancing of the Nicholas Brothers – Constance Valis Hill (2000)**  
A detailed study of the Nicholas Brothers, offering insight into virtuosity, musicality, and performance within tap's jazz tradition.
- **Jazz Dance: A History of the Roots and Branches – Lindsay Guarino & Wendy Oliver**  
A comprehensive overview of jazz dance history, including tap and its cultural context.
- **Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts – Brenda Dixon Gottschild (1998)**  
A foundational text examining Africanist aesthetics in American performance, offering key concepts for understanding rhythm, embodiment, and cultural influence.
- **Steppin' on the Blues: The Visible Rhythms of African American Dance – Jacqui Malone (1996)**  
An important exploration of African American dance traditions and their cultural, musical, and social significance.
- **Tapping the Source: Tap Dance Stories, Theory, and Practice – Buster Buffalino (2004)**  
A collection of writings and reflections exploring tap dance practice, history, and pedagogy.
- **Tap Into Improv: A Guide to Tap Dance Improvisation – Barbara Duffy (2017)**  
A practical guide to improvisation in tap dance, supporting musicality, creativity, and individual voice.

# PRACTICE-BASED LEARNING & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Engaging with live practice including tap jams, workshops, and musician-led sessions is a key part of learning through oral transmission and community exchange.

Across the UK, regular opportunities exist for dancers and teachers to develop musicality, improvisation, and historical understanding through practice. These include monthly tap jams (for example, in Liverpool and London), alongside teacher training, bespoke professional development sessions, and workshops focused on tap dance history and its relationship to jazz music.

Organisations such as [Sole Rebel C.I.C.](#) facilitate this kind of work through a monthly Jazz Tap Jam in Liverpool, alongside teacher training and workshops exploring musicality, history, and practice. Engaging in these environments supports teachers to experience tap dance as a living, social, and musical form.

## CHILD-FRIENDLY RESOURCES

- ***Rap a Tap Tap: Here's Bojangles—Think of That!* – Leo & Diane Dillon**  
A beautifully illustrated children's book celebrating the life and rhythm of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, introducing young readers to tap dance through storytelling and movement.
- ***Happy Feet (film, 2006)***  
Offers an accessible and engaging way for children to connect rhythm, movement, and musical storytelling. Behind-the-scenes clips are also available online, showing tap dancer Savion Glover, who created the footwork for the film, helping to connect the animation to real tap practice.