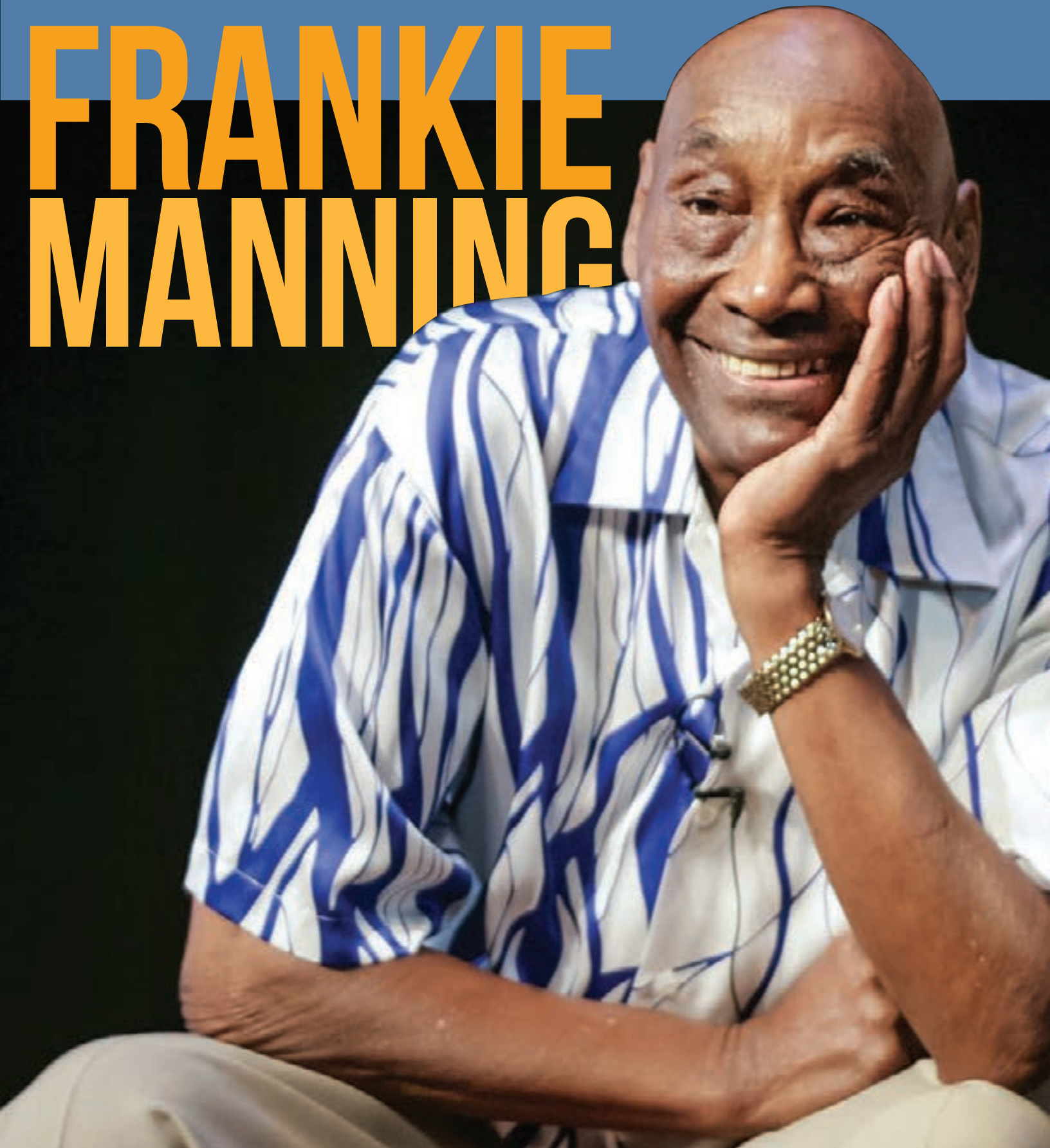


# FRANKIE MANNING



**100**  **COMMEMORATIVE  
BOOK**



## FROM THE ORGANIZERS

by Mandi Gould, Project Manager, on behalf of the Frankie 100 Team  
(Elliott Donnelly, Sing Lim, Tim Collins)

The word “daunting” doesn’t quite sum up the epic task of planning Frankie 100.

In early 2013, with signs of spring beginning to peek through the gray wintery days in Toronto, I had my first Frankie 100 call with Elliott Donnelly and the words “terrifying” or “insane” were probably more accurate descriptors.

There had been murmurings of Frankie 100 ever since Frankie 95. As the newest member to the Board of Advisors for the Frankie Manning Foundation, I enthusiastically reached out to Elliott Donnelly to offer my help. We had announced Frankie 100 at the Herräng Dance Camp in 2012 but what I didn’t realize until that first call was that there was not actually an organizing team. By volunteering to help, I had accidentally become 2nd in command... of a team of two!

We were extremely fortunate to bring Sing Lim, Tim Collins and Jason Hay on to the committee and thanks to their early support, got Frankie 100 off the ground. Since May, the list of volunteers, staff, and cast has grown to over 200 and we are thankful to everyone who has played a part. There is so much love and passion supporting this event, and that’s because there is so much love for Frankie Manning.

Whenever the task seemed too great, I reminded myself of a promise made in a blog post on the morning of April 27th, 2009:

*Frankie has passed away – it’s our responsibility to share what he gave us. Everyone has a story to tell about Frankie. About how he inspired and touched them on a personal level. It wasn’t just that he taught us to dance. It wasn’t just that he showed us the soul of Lindy Hop. That is important, but it’s more than that. Frankie Manning inspired LIFE. His passion for dance will always be synonymous with his passion for life. This man left a legacy and I believe that it’s our responsibility to carry on the Lindy Hop gospel. Tell people about Lindy Hop. Tell them about Frankie Manning. Tell them what it means to swing. Show them, with more than steps, that same passion and joy that Frankie brought to us. Thank you, Frankie Manning, for everything you gave us.*

Despite the time that has passed, Frankie’s message and values continue to reach new generations of dancers. In addition to those who were personally touched by Frankie, there are hundreds of new dancers attending Frankie 100 who never met the man. Even before the event tickets sold out, the enthusiasm was palpable. The day after the website went live, we received this message:

*Submitted on 2013/05/15 at 10:08 pm  
Ever since Frankie 95 I have been waiting for this event. For the last year and a half I have googled “Frankie 100” monthly, and for the last few months, weekly. I can’t wait and am super excited! ~ Canadian Devin*

The most important part of an event like this is YOU. All of you! I refer to the Lindy Hoppers who are in New York for Frankie 100 and to those of you attending in spirit.

Lindy Hop is certainly the most inclusive, binding, force of nature that I’ve ever experienced.

We, the Lindy Hoppers of the world, we are Frankie’s legacy. We are all part of something bigger. That’s what Frankie 100 and now World Lindy Hop Day are really about.

We, the Lindy Hoppers of the world, give shape to Frankie’s legacy in every swing out. Today we celebrate Frankie Manning in New York, and tomorrow we continue to celebrate, everywhere and for always.



Photo by Brian McGill

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**ADDITIONAL THANK-YOUS!** We often see only a finished product, and don't see all the work that has gone into putting on a major event like Frankie 100, and pulling together a book such as this. Additional thanks to other behind-the-scenes helpers, including: Skye Humphries, Cecilia Cromnow, Tyonni Martin, the Frankie100 Organizing Team and all the many unnamed volunteers who have contributed to making this happen.

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*Cover photo taken at the Frankie Manning Autobiography Book Signing  
and After-Party, 29 June 2007 at the Riverside Church in Harlem, NYC  
Photo by Ryan Swift*

# FROM THE EDITOR

**Deborah Huisken**

I've wanted to do a book on Frankie since 1993. Driving with my dance friend Monica across Europe to Herräng for the first time, knowing she knew Frankie from New York, I asked why no one had ever written a book on him. Turned out someone was working on it, but it was some years before Cynthia Millman's carefully-researched **Frankie Manning: Ambassador of Lindy Hop** actually appeared in print.

That summer in Herräng no one was quite sure if there was a book in process or not, so with Frankie's blessing I started interviewing people – and what an amazing group of people there was to talk to. Ryan Francois, Steve Mitchell, Chazz Young, Lance Benicheck, Monica Coe, Karen Goldstein, Lennart Westerlund, Ewa Staremo, Catrine Llundgren, Chester Whitmore – not to mention Frankie himself. Plus a cast of what felt like thousands, dancing night and day, sleeping anywhere and everywhere... I left literally paralyzed with a fatigue that didn't register until we tried to drive off (I couldn't). But the material! Those stories became articles in the international Lindy Hop newsletter *Hoppin'* that an amazing group of volunteers from around the world pulled together (yes, in print) for over two years. After which the internet started to pop, and the demise of print publications appeared imminent...

Fast forward to this past fall, when Mandi called and asked me to put together a book for Frankie 100. She probably didn't know what she was getting herself into, but I knew what I wanted – to have the voices of as many of those who knew him as possible share that experience. Because I wanted to commemorate Frankie.

I chose most of the topics in the book because, having lost my heart to Lindy Hop in 1990, I've seen a bit of the recent history of this dance that I love, and many changes – some for the better, some (in my opinion), not. That's why there's an article about the impact of competition, for instance – because I and other followers sometimes find younger dancers intent on competition less interested in connecting with their partner on a social dance floor and seeing what we can create together... (actually, not just younger leaders, come to think of it!) Maybe Frankie was like this when he was young – I wasn't there. But at the time I knew him, when Frankie led you in a dance, you knew you were in good hands – that he would take care of you, give you space to shine, make you feel like a queen, dance *with* you not against you.



I haven't agreed with everything we put in this book – for instance, to me the dancing is not better now than it was 20 years ago, as Nick Williams asserts. You see, I had the opportunity to dance socially in New York, with some of Frankie's contemporaries, many of whom are now gone. In my time I made it to the Cat Club, Irving Plaza, Wells Restaurant, and Lucy's in NYC; the Pines in upstate New York. My first class with Frankie was at the Pines, and although it was a huge class, after he'd brought me up out of the crowd to demonstrate something I knew nothing about (gulp!), it stayed with me that he took a moment to say thank you to me, and see that I got back to my place in the circle. That was typical Frankie, tho I had no clue at the time. And one of my first times dancing in New York City at Irving Plaza, an older gentleman asked me to dance to a fast song, then showed me how to slow down and “half time”. I'm thrilled that Mickey Davidson has brought some more of these wonderful older dancers into focus. If you are lucky enough to be near any of Frankie's contemporaries at Frankie 100 and they are willing to dance with you, you are in for a treat, but pay attention because they WILL surprise you. And you will get a taste of what made Frankie and these leaders (not just men, because women like Dawn Hampton are also fabulous leaders) so great. They have maturity, experience, and a generosity of spirit that makes a dance with them a treat.

I have left the articles in the voice of the writer insofar as possible – including the variety of US and European/Canadian spellings – unless the point was obscured or it was too long. Frankie touched a wide variety of people, all over the world, living very different lifestyles, speaking many different languages. I wanted that variety to be heard and felt.

So many things didn't go into the book that could have. The vision of the ILHC to help more kids learn to dance. Mickey Davidson's work with school children around the New York metro area and beyond for so many years. Ryan Francois's work with Frankie on Broadway and in films. Tim Collins who's brought Lindy Hop to Mexico and Tibet. Chester Whitmore's connections with Lindy on the west coast in films. Mikey Pedroza's stories about how Lindy and Frankie impacted him as a young man. This book could have been much longer! Due to pressures of time, those and many more great stories (and photos) didn't make it.

There were some new words, in particular *perennity*, from Zack Richard. There's a bit of personal history behind his *Business of Lindy Hop* article. Tho never wanting to be a business person, I ultimately became an executive coach instead of a professional dancer or event organizer. Along the way it became clear that what I'd learned from being around Frankie was and is so needed in the business world – his capacity for humility, focus, professionalism, heart, and above all, partnership. Frankie wasn't perfect – none of us are. But he loved this dance, loved sharing it, wanted

the joy it could bring to continue on after him. As Zack has pointed out, there is much that a business approach can do to actually strengthen our precious worldwide community, and ensure it continues and thrives.

Ramona Staffeld's article captured what it was about Lindy that so captivated me. *Frankie taught... ultimately how to get to know our own personalities and uniqueness, [and how] to express ourselves and talk to our partners with our body language, cultivating our personal voice through an improvisational form.* Amen to that!! IMHO we need more of that in the world, and Lindy Hop is a stand for it.

There are other delights – like Jamin' Jackson's *Frankie & We*. Frankie wrote in my copy of **Ambassador of Lindy Hop** something like *you have helped keep this dance alive*. It always puzzled me, because my part in the grand scheme of things wasn't big – I danced socially, didn't teach, compete, or perform; pulled together a few newsletters for a few years. Jamin's article made me rethink what Frankie might have meant; that even the smallest contributions add up.

Even Judy's article about the gravesite, and Ralph Gabriner's wonderful photos of Frankie's funeral and repast, brought back fond memories of both services for Frankie; one uptown, one downtown. Both involved dancing, and downtown even the rather proper and stiff clergy joined in, their smiles growing as they loosened up! It became clear then that Frankie's legacy had surely outlived him, when the joy and love that he had shared with so many erupted past the grief we all felt, and the legacy he had left us spread to still more people. It will continue to do so for a long time to come, in part because of people like all those who took the time to contribute to this book.

Over 50 people from all over the world sent in articles and photographs that we have used in this book – more contributions came in for which there simply was not room.

I personally thank you, one and all – it has been a real pleasure working with all of you to honor this man we have been so privileged to know, to love, and/or to be touched by.



*Frankie Manning and Deborah Huisken social dancing at the First World Lindy Hop Championship, 1995, Oslo, Norway.  
Photo by Brian McGill*

# THE REVIVAL OF THE LINDY HOP

*Karl Lennart Westerlund*

*The revival of the Lindy Hop started on January 5, 1984. At least in my world there is no doubt about that, since that was the day I first saw A Day at the Races at a small movie theatre in Stockholm, Sweden. The only possible alternative date would be April 10 the same year, the day I first saw Hellzapoppin'. Both occasions were exclusive moments and made an everlasting impression on me. I had never seen anything like this dance before. Around the same time, some people in England as well as in the U.S. experienced the same sensation. I believe that none of us at the time had any inkling of an upcoming revival of the Lindy Hop. It was most likely all about a personal obsession around a dance that had been forgotten for a very long time. A few years later, a handful of proselytes had followed in the footsteps of the pioneers, and embryos of scenes could be observed in the key cities from where the beginning of the revival soon would emanate.*

Swing dance historians often point out that the Lindy Hop and other forms of partnered dancing dropped out of fashion around 1960. Touch dances were no longer in demand, and the younger generation fancied other types of dancing, if dancing at all. In the U.S., old-timers and exclusive performance troupes were continuing to dance the Lindy Hop, somehow keeping it alive on stages and in small clubs. When British pop music and other trendy styles of modern music started to invade the general Western market, throughout the 1960s and well into the early 1970s, swing music and Lindy Hoppin' reached an all-time low. The future of vernacular jazz dancing looked dismal indeed. However, a few years later, there were signs pointing in another and more promising direction. These signs came from a handful of different sources, including movies like *American Graffiti* (1973) and *Grease* (1977), the popularity of the disco era dance the Hustle, the re-introduction of Latin partnered dancing under the new and trendy name of salsa, the returning interest in early forms of rock 'n' roll-music, and a general trend towards nostalgia and the good old days.

In 1981, Larry Schulz, business manager of the Sandra Cameron Dance Center in New York City, happened to meet legendary Savoy Ballroom dancer Albert Minns at a dance event organized by Mama Lou Parks. Larry introduced Albert to his wife, ballroom champion Sandra Cameron, and despite Albert's initial resistance, they convinced him

to start to teach classes at their studio. Albert had very little experience in teaching and questioned both his own abilities as a swing dance teacher, and the likelihood that any students would enroll. Fortunately, soon his predictions proved very wrong, and a small and enthusiastic group was established under his tutelage. The original, Harlem-based Lindy Hop had suddenly and surprisingly established a new and dedicated platform from which it would continue to expand. Two years later, in 1983, three independent initiatives established the beginning of the revival of the Lindy Hop : in London, Terry Monaghan and Warren Heyes attended vernacular jazz classes taught by American instructor Mama Lou Parks; in Stockholm, Anders Lind and I found a copy of the book **Jazz Dance** by Marshall Stearns in the Stockholm Dance Museum library; and in Pasadena, California, Erin Stevens and Steven Mitchell were exposed to the Marx Brothers movie *A Day at the Races*. Parallel to this, a handful of other young dancers, including Sylvia Sykes and Jonathan Bixby, were also navigating towards the Lindy Hop but from various angles and perspectives.

Already in the mid-1980s, the New York Swing Dance Society was founded, the Pasadena Ballroom Association started to teach the Lindy Hop, and in Europe both the Jivin' Lindy Hoppers in London and The Rhythm Hot Shots in Stockholm were seriously into forming performance troupes focusing on the Lindy Hop and other forms of vernacular jazz dancing. Harlem old-timers like Norma Miller and Frankie Manning were suddenly back in the Lindy Hop business, and on the American west coast, different young dancers started to hang out and take classes from Hollywood swing dance legends. The ball was rolling once again, slowly but surely spreading the dance to new places all over the U.S., as well as in Europe. Around the same time, the Herräng Dance Camp, located in a small one-horse town in the countryside outside of Stockholm, started to position itself as an international melting pot for the Lindy Hop. Teachers from around the world started to appear on the scene, traveling around and passing on the dance to local newcomers. When Frankie turned 80 in May, 1994, no fewer than 700 dancers from eight countries showed up at *Can't Top the Lindy Hop!* at the Pennsylvania Hotel on 7th Avenue in New York. Swing dancing was no doubt back in circulation. A few years later, the American scene boomed in the aftermath of a couple of full length swing movies, a GAP commercial that featured the dance and a sudden interest for contemporary swing music among certain groups of young people.



*Frankie Manning dancing with The Rhythm Hot Shots from Sweden at the Boogie-Baeren Swing Ball 1996 Photo by Boogie-Baeren Munich e.V*

As the Lindy Hop moved into the 2000s, the American scene was at an obvious peak while the rest of the swing world was under slower but constant growth. The internet had started to become one of the main distributor channels of Lindy Hop information/knowhow. Combined with the efforts of hundreds and hundreds of local swing dance teachers, the internet became an enormous platform for creating connections and continuing to spread the dance form. International instructors/performers were now jet-setting all over the world for workshops, camps, competitions and general swing dance events. Most of the globetrotters were in their twenties or thirties, except for one, Frankie Manning, who was in his late eighties. This remarkable man had been onboard the revival all the way from the mid-1980s, throughout the 1990s and finally into the 2000s, and would continue being the undisputed king of the Lindy Hop until his death in April, 2009. The importance of his presence during the essential years of the revival can never be overestimated. The scene owes him a lot and his contribution to the dance was outstanding and enormous.

Over the past 30 years, the Lindy Hop has made a remarkable comeback. From the perspective of the early 1980s, the development is nearly surreal. There are good reasons to believe that no one at the time had the slightest idea of what would happen during the decades to come. Over the years, countless numbers of people, in places as disparate as Edmonton, Tel Aviv and Nizhnij Novgorod, have been a part of the process, helping out in small as well as big ways. Today, the scene is vital, well-anchored and continues to expand. During the first era (from the late 1920s to the late 1950s), the dance survived for some 30 years before it began to fade away; the second era (from the early 1980s until present), is already past 30 years and there is no sign of a decline. Like the long-established salsa and tango scenes, today's Lindy Hop scene no longer stands or falls with new trends. The Lindy Hop is deeply rooted in its own subculture, and from today's horizon, the future of the art form looks more than promising.



# THE SECOND WAVE OF THE SWING REVIVAL

*Monica Coe*

There are those who think that the Swing Revival began in the USA in the late 1990s<sup>1</sup>. The baby boomers among us would beg to differ, as per the preceding article by Lennart Westerlund.

On the other hand, there was a confluence of events in the world of film, television, theater, music and the internet that led to a dramatic spike of interest in both swing music and therefore Lindy Hop by a whole new generation of dancers, who arrived on the dance scene ten to fifteen years after the first wave of dancers in the swing revival.

When interest in swing dance and big band music took off in New York, LA, London & Stockholm in the mid-'80s, there were scads of 20- and 30-somethings active in their respective swing dance communities. But the influx of newcomers seemed to plateau a bit until a huge increase of interest took place in the US in the late '90s. That's when those of us who had been on the scene for a while started to scratch our heads, wondering where all of the youngsters were coming from.

In hindsight, if one looks at what was happening in popular culture, the events that led to swing's renewed popularity are fairly evident:

In film, early on in the '90s, swing dancing and an interest in retro hair styles and clothing started working its way into the common consciousness. First there was Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* in late 1992. Then, *Swing Kids* came out spring of 1993. *The Mask*, featuring Jim Carey opened in summer of 1994. *Swingers* made the film festival circuit in the fall of 1996, and opened in the summer of the following year. *Blast from the Past* featuring Brendan Fraser opened in early 1999. Swing Dancing also appeared in the 2001 Ben Affleck film, *Pearl Harbor*.

On television, there were similar seeds being planted: Debbie Allen's *Stompin' at the Savoy* aired in April of 1992. But perhaps the greatest television influence came from a widely-aired 1998 commercial for The Gap featuring khaki-clad dancers doing the Lindy Hop to a cover of Louis

Prima's *Jump, Jive and Wail*. Lindy Hoppers might refer to themselves as "pre-Gap ad" or "post-Gap ad" when they tell their stories about how they got started swing dancing.

In mainstream magazines, swing dancing was also making itself known: During 1998 and 1999, articles about swing and/or Frankie Manning appeared in **GQ**, **Smithsonian**, and **People Magazine**. A glossy magazine called **Atomic: The Essential Guide to Retro Culture**, published 15 quarterly issues starting in spring of 1999, with a profile of Frankie in the second issue.

One can presume that the Broadway show *Black and Blue*, (January 1989) and the Off-Broadway show *Song of Singapore*, (1991), both stimulated interest in swing era music and dance. Tapping into the dramatic rise in interest in the late '90s, the Broadway musical *Swing* opened at the St. James Theatre in New York City in the fall of 1999.

On the music scene, neo-swing bands took off dramatically. The Brian Setzer Orchestra's version of *Jump, Jive and Wail* was featured in the ever-present Gap commercial. The Big Bad Voodoo Daddies played a set in the film *Swingers*, and later appeared at the Super-bowl half-time show in 1999. The Royal Crown Revue appeared in the film *The Mask* and became regulars at The Derby, the LA night club featured in the film *Swingers*. They worked with Bette Midler on one of her albums and made many film, television and radio appearances.

But beyond pop cultural influences, one can't underestimate the influence of the internet on the renewed interest in swing dance and music. The founders of *Yehoodi.com* introduced their website in September of 1998, seeking to create a forum to communicate with other dance fans, to hear news, and to find information about music, bands, and dance venues. Their timing was perfect, as the site became an international go-to destination for swing fans. Soon, nightclubs, dance studios, independent teachers, bands, dance camps, vendors, and performance groups were all generating their own web pages. More recently, social media sites like YouTube and Facebook have raised the impact of the internet to a whole new level.

The net result of these influences in pop-culture and internet technology changed the New York and international swing dance scenes radically. In New York, we had imagined ourselves fortunate to have more than one or two venues with live swing music available to us each week back in the '80s and early '90s. But, suddenly there were places to go out dancing every night of the week if one had the inclination and endurance. It was an extraordinary time in the dance community, and the increase in interest brought a new energy to the scene.

Throughout the first wave of the swing revival and on through the second, certain people became constants on the dance scene: Frankie Manning, Norma Miller, Dawn Hampton and others of their generation. However, enormous credit also goes to younger individuals who worked together to develop the swing dance communities and teaching programs in their respective countries and beyond. These leaders on the teaching scene traveled all over the world to dance camps and studios; people such as Ryan Francois & Jenny Thomas; Steve Mitchell, Sylvia Sykes, Simon Selmon, Rob & Diane Van Haaren, and the Rhythm Hot Shots, to name only a few. While not all necessarily the very first to work with Frankie and others of his generation, they were there early on, and by their dedication, instruction, and their example out on the dance floor, they have been an inspiration to the newer generations of Lindy Hoppers that have followed. Long may the waves continue to roll!



*Shim Sham, Monica Coe, Frankie. North River Bar NYC 1988  
Photo:Ralph Gabriner*

\*1. In Wikipedia, while "Lindy Hop Revival" is currently accurate, "Swing Revival", which focuses mainly on the music, indicates it came in the late '90s.

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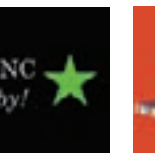
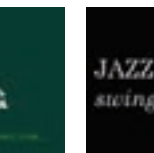
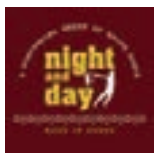
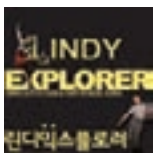
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KLEIDSAMES & STILVOLLES

# A TAPESTRY OF VOICES

FRANKIE'S HOMETOWN SOCIAL DANCE SCENE IN THE 80'S



*Whyte's Hopping Maniacs performing with "Le Cotton Club de New York" at the Moulin Rouge in Paris, summer 1937. (left to right) Naomi Waller and Frankie Manning, Lucille Middleton and Jerome Williams, Mildred Cruse and Billy Williams. Photo credit: Studio C. Bracken*

***Mickey Davidson, assisted by Laura Jeffers***

To me, the 1980s was a moment in time when the reawakening of Lindy Hop traditions and the institutionalization of those traditions overlapped. This can be illustrated by looking at the difference between uptown and downtown in NYC.

Uptown the dance was part of a life scene. The clubs and bars that had music – such as Smalls Paradise and later places like Willie's, Wells, The Cotton Club, and Lady Lucy's recreated the energy and expectations that had existed during Swing's

heyday. That is what drew people who had attended places like the Savoy to Smalls and the like. As a young person who went uptown to Smalls on a Monday night, I found no dance lessons before the band played or in between sets. You learned by hanging out and by doing, observing and being given tips that you used to get better. Downtown the dance was given definition, breaking movement down with counts, giving formal names to steps and creating forms that could be replicated and standardized by taking classes. During this time the dance existed in both forms at the same time.

This was the scene in New York, uptown and downtown, that brought this dance back to the attention of the general public. During this time, there were people older than Frankie. Frankie being the observer he was, used this scene (uptown and downtown) to draw from as he developed his teaching concept, teaching style, how to count, what was important to communicate, how to communicate, how to adjust and grow into the future of possibilities. I know this because I was with Frankie and Ernie Smith in the early days of traveling and teaching. I started living in this scene in 1985 and my dance life changed.

I am using the voices of twenty-six dancers we interviewed who, like myself, were there and were affected, old and young. To tell the story of this time here is my starting place: some of the events that played out during this time included:

**• Sally Summers took Larry Shultz uptown to one of Mama Lou Parks' competitions. He saw Al Minns dancing socially for the first time at Smalls Paradise. Larry invited Al to teach downtown at the Sandra Cameron Dance Center. Margaret Batiuchok and members of the future New York Swing Dance Society began studying with Al, and when he died, Frankie was asked to take his place as the teacher.**

**• Al Cobbs brought a big band every Monday night to Smalls Paradise in Harlem,**

**• Smalls set the tone for the clubs that came later and that had dance bands (Willie's, Wells, The Cotton Club and Lady Lucy's). The environment, the people and the music combined to recreate the dancing spirit that existed during the height of Smalls' popularity. Older and younger people in the creative business used Smalls as a way of networking with the elders, the community, each other, getting tips and being seen. It was like Cheers, the TV show where everyone saw you dance even if they didn't know your name. People looking for a place to hang out came to Smalls, knowing there would be a good time on Monday nights. Larry and the downtown students started going uptown to Smalls regularly, together and on their own.**

**• Norma Miller came back to town ready to put a performing group together. Amaniyea and Clyde, who were involved with Mama Lou Parks' events, Frankie, Stony, Darlene, Billy and others began rehearsing with Norma at Sandra Cameron Dance Center. Margaret and other students would come through the studio during rehearsals and watch Norma's troupe at work.**

**• The New York Swing Dance Society started producing Sunday Night Big Band Dances downtown at the Cat Club, and later at Irving Plaza. There was live music in a good location and it was open to anyone who wanted to dance.**

These people were committed to living their individual truths, some knowing the historical importance of the moment, others just living in the wonderful energy and spirit of the dance, may it have been uptown or downtown. This is the start of my story, told in oral tradition.



# THE ELDERS

I'm starting this section with Larry Schultz, because although age-wise he straddles the generations, it was he who originally created the opportunity for uptown dancers to get exposure downtown, which in NYC at that time was still a bit of a chasm to cross.

Larry found Al and Frankie, and asked them to come downtown. He was taken uptown and discovered a dance form that would be good for the Sandra Cameron Studio school and curriculum, of which he was a part. I feel the downtown people were reawakened to this dance by the

uptown people. Larry talked about the 1943 **Life Magazine** that featured Whiteys and the Lindy Hop with only little mention of African-Americans doing it, which is why Smalls in the '80s is important; it gave uptown and downtown a platform for what was to come. Dancing did not stop for the 30 years Frankie worked in the Post Office and raised his family. Teaching at Larry's studio gave Frankie a vehicle to re-enter the dance industry by creating his own process – the method and student base that we are all celebrating. Just as in jazz music, each outstanding artist has their own sound; in dance, Frankie found, developed and shared his love for the dance with his special movement style with a global community.

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*Sally Summers, dance critic and historian and an old friend of mine, encouraged me to go to an event produced by Mama Lou Parks. It was competition dancing; very physical, very fast. I didn't understand it at all. There was a social dance interlude in between the competition. I look out and there's this older man dancing, I turned to Sally and asked who that man was dancing out there. It was Al Minns.*

LARRY SHULTZ

*In the 80's I saw in the paper that Norma Miller was doing something at the Village Gate. I went. Norma was the only person I knew. She introduced me to Margaret (Batiuchok) and we went upstairs and won a dance contest. She was a student of Al Minns at that time.*

CHARLIE MEADE

*Bill, my husband and I went to Smalls Paradise even before Al Cobbs band. In the early days there were different people, it was really like a club or cabaret. In the '80s Al Cobbs came along and did a weekly thing with his big band. The attitude of the people and the music was the same as in my earlier days.*

SHIRLEY DOIG

*I went to Smalls Paradise when Al Cobbs used to play there in the '80s. Irving Plaza was a nice place and it had some nice bands but it just wasn't the same as the Cat Club. I enjoyed myself dancing at the Cat Club. All of us were like good buddies.*

CALVIN JOHNSON

*I started to come out dancing because of [my husband] George Lloyd in the '50s. I had such a good time, went to the Savoy, Smalls Paradise, and the Showman. In the '80s we found out that Smalls was playing our kind of music, we went there every Monday night then to Northern Lights.*

KELLY LLOYD

*I enjoyed the music and the swing dancing. I knew it as hand dancing coming from the DC area. When Eric, my husband (who was with the Count Basie Orchestra) was in off the road it was my time to hit Manhattan dancing. It didn't take me long to get an entourage. We would meet at our tavern, called "The Meeting Place" and I would drive. The [Harlem] Renaissance Band would call us "The Staten Island Ladies". Some of the ladies who came from Staten Island with me were; Cassie O'Brian, Elaine Smith, Dolores Hughes, Beryl York, Van Jean Pitts. The car would be full.*

ILEAN DIXON



CHAZZ YOUNG

*The Cat Club was special. They had a live band. What was special about it was it was the beginning of the re-occurrence of the swing era. We would meet on Sunday nights at the Cat Club. Mickey, Clyde, Norma, Frankie, anybody who knew about the Savoy who was still alive would come down.*

CHAZZ YOUNG



CALVIN JOHNSON

*Playing for dancers has been a part of my life almost from the beginning. I played for swing [dancers] when I started with Lionel Hampton in the 1950s. I'm glad I got a chance to get in on the tail end of the big band and swing era – people were dancing in ballrooms all across the country.*

ED PAZANT



FRED STATON

*From my point of view it was outstanding seeing the young people dance to the music. It made me think of long time ago when I used to visit the Savoy, the Renaissance Ballroom and all the clubs around in the area in the olden days.*

*The Savoy was like the headquarters for the dance; if you didn't know how to do it you just went up there and you had fun learning how to do it.*

JOHN SCOTT



SCOTTIE

*Harry, my dance partner, learned the Trankie-do from Whitey while working with Whitey's Lindy Hoppers. Then he taught it to me. Mama Lou was doing a show and I went to the show and Harry's partner didn't show up; he said that I would do, and that's how we started to work together. We have been partners ever since.*

RUBY REEVES



FRANKIE &  
MICKEY DAVIDSON

*I was in Pittsburg when Smalls was in its heyday. We had a Savoy in Pittsburg. The Pittsburg Savoy was an independent venue but like the Harlem Savoy, Big Bands would come through with the Pittsburg community dancing until the war drafted most of the musicians. We watched and absorbed the different performers who came through Pittsburg. We developed our own styles.*

FRED STATON

*Photos courtesy of Mickey Davidson*

*At first I wouldn't go to the Cat Club. The lady across the street went every Sunday – she got me to go with her. When I walked in, I knew the band and the heads in the band, I knew the singer. Then I started going every Sunday. That's the first time I met Frank Manning. I didn't know any of the people at that time.*

DAWN HAMPTON



BINTA,  
FRANKIE & AMANIYEA

*Going to Smalls during the '80s gave me and Frankie a chance to go out dancing every Monday night. Larry Shultz would come up from Sandra Cameron studio with some of his students. Uptown or downtown, it didn't make a difference to me – it was someplace to dance. It wasn't as glamorous as what I was used to but it gave Frankie and I an opportunity to dance.*

NORMA MILLER



NAKIA



LEROY &  
LONNETTA

*The Harlem Blues and Jazz Band was formed in March 1973.*

*I mentioned to Clyde Bernhardt, a trombonist and blues singer with King Oliver. I admired these musicians because they had been on the recordings from the '20s through the '40s. Some of them had been forgotten and I wanted to rekindle all the greatness they had, and the experience.*

DOC VOLLMAR



GEORGE GEE  
& NORMA MILLER

## THE YOUNG ONES

As a professional modern dancer in Harlem in the early '80s, I had heard about older people doing the old time dances, but I heard they didn't like professional dancers. I found out about Smalls and went. I have never been the same. I knew it was important for me to learn the dance standards just as musicians had to know musical standards. I got that from Sun Ra.



EDDIE PAZZANT  
& DAWN HAMPTON

*I went to the Cat Club after dancing from 5:00-7:00 at Mark Ballroom, and didn't leave the Cat Club til 10:30. I also went to the Red Parrot, it was a huge scene. Studying with Al and then Frankie was interesting, really different from ballroom-style and teaching.*

*They were trying to figure out how to teach their steps to us, and we were really 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8 kind of people.*

ALICE MCINERNEY



JUDY PRITCHETT  
& CYNTHIA MILLMAN



*I used to be at Smalls with Mama Lou Parks. Clyde and I won the Harvest Moon Ball she gave there. I remember Northern Lights. When I first went up there I was truly amazed at the energy of the elders that were there.*

AMANIYEA PAYNE

*I started hanging out with swing dancers at Northern Lights. I felt like I was connecting with a different generation. Northern Lights was like an informal dance class. All of those old-timers taught me how to swing dance; that was my introduction to it.*

BINTA

*I went to Smalls Paradise because tap dancers like Cookie Cook, Buster Brown and the Copasetics hung out at places like that. At Wells all the guys were there so that's what was happening to me.*

CLYDE WILDER

*I started swing dancing at Smalls Paradise. I was meeting so many people that I normally wouldn't have come in contact with. I loved meeting people from all over the city. I knew the downtown dance scene but uptown was different, all different ages and I really appreciated seeing the different individuals dance. A lot of the older people had actually gone to the Savoy.*

CYNTHIA MILLMAN

*Smalls Paradise was when I first stumbled into the scene. When I started hanging out at places like Smalls Paradise and the Cat Club it changed my life. There was a very powerful experience in those old moves; like church, it did something for me.*

JUDY PRITCHETT

*When I went to the Cat Club for the first time, I remember that I didn't even get on the dance floor. I watched everyone dance, felt intimidated, and just left. I decided I would take some classes with Paul Grecki and volunteer for the New York Swing Dance Society as a way to meet people. Having met people at my level and with a couple classes under my belt, I screwed up my courage and went back to the Cat Club.*

KAREN GOLDSTEIN

*I joined Mickey D. and her friends over at the Swing Mondays. My teacher was the music and the dance itself. Mickey D. and Amaniyea told me, "You got to get down. Bend your knees. You're not performing on a modern dance stage! This is different!" And it was!*

LONNETTA GAINES

*I'm a native New Yorker. I started my first band in Pittsburgh in 1980 when I was in college.... I did my first show for the New York Swing Dance Society in 1987 at the Cat Club. I like to think I'm just an honest to goodness lover of big band music.... I do it because I'm selfish; I love the sound of a big band, dancers, and cats who want to blow.*

GEORGE GEE

*The Cat Club and Irving Plaza dances were produced by the New York Swing Dance Society. What it was, was all-inclusive, everybody was milling with everybody. Everyone was dancing together and respecting each other. It was a great gathering place. This changed my life.*

MARGARET BATIUCHOK

*I used to walk past the Baby Grand on 125th St. I heard the music, and then I started looking inside. One day I just walked up in there. It was amazing watching all the different styles of dancing on the dance floor. Everybody had his or her own style but they were doing the same dance.*

NAKIA

*What really made us become a dance band was the community; you guys. We first went into Willie's playing concert listening music. During the sets you guys would hear the tunes that were danceable and get up and dance so each week we were able to identify the music like Shiny Stockings, Conner Pocket, Killer Joe, etc. The playbook evolved by the way the dancers responded to the tunes.*

RON ALLEN

*Photos courtesy of Mickey Davidson*

# DOWNTOWN/UPTOWN

In the same place or places, individuals had different experiences, observations and emotional reflections while dancing and interacting with each other. Individuality created a variety of dancing styles, expressions and laid the foundation for movement innovation by the young. It didn't matter if you were a counter of steps or feeling the music. Frankie's presence was uptown and downtown every Sunday and Monday when he was in town. There were other places and people he hung with as he absorbed and figured out how and what to communicate in helping others feel the joy he knew about as part of his ordinary dance life. Sunday and Monday was dancing church for me. Uptown I followed the music from club to club, Smalls, Northern Lights, Willies, Wells, Lady Lucy's and the Cotton Club. Downtown I followed the different bands that were at the Cat Club and Irving Plaza.

*Whenever we went out Bill, my husband, would always buy me a corsage that I wore on my wrist. The attitude of the people, the music was the same as in my earlier days, Smalls and Northern Lights were really nice places to go I didn't have to look over my shoulder. Everybody danced their own style and it was really nice. At the Cat Club everybody knew everybody and everybody enjoyed each other's company all nationalities it was just a nice place to go. Irving Plaza was nice and warm.*

SHIRLEY DOIG

*I started going to the Cat Club with George because he and Margaret were dance partners, I really love the Cat Club I think that was one of my favorites. We used to have so much fun just laughing and cracking up. The level of respect that we used to have is very different from today, At Lady Lucy's we brought food and everything; we used to have that place jumping.*

KELLY LLOYD

This is a strong example of how there is no judgment, better or worse, just a good time between uptown and downtown with this individual.

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*I remember when I first started working with Al and he came down to the studio to work with Sandra and Sandra asked "but what are the counts?" Al says "counts? I'm sorry I don't use counts I just listen to the music". It's all in the music. We had the same challenge with Frankie. Al and Frankie were so connected with the music, I had to break the news to them that our students were not that connected with the music, and they needed counts. We teach dance to counts. This was a whole new approach to the learning process for both of these men.*

LARRY SCHULTZ

*I enjoyed myself dancing at the Cat Club and Irving Plaza. I knew I could go there and that I would find someone I could dance with who understood music the way I did. People asked each other to dance, people learned by watching, nice intelligent people came there. The Harlem Renaissance band was playing at Lady Lucy's and it was just what the doctor ordered. I enjoyed every minute of it. I go to the Cotton Club fairly often. The location is near my house. Nearly every time I go dancing I have a good time.*

CALVIN JOHNSON

*I went to the Cat Club on Sundays and Smalls Paradise on Mondays. Margaret and I did the first demonstration at the Cat Club. Irving Plaza had more space than the Cat Club but after the Cat Club we started going all over down into the village and other places where you could dance. I pretty much stayed downtown.*

CHARLIE MEADE

*I went to the Cat Club because I enjoyed the music and the swing dancing. I went to Irving Plaza on Sundays. Uptown we would be jammed into Willie's and be just as happy as we could be. It was small. If you didn't know someone's name you knew his or her face 'cause you were there almost every week. There was a nice atmosphere and camaraderie. We would go to Lady Lucy's for that big band music. Uptown was a warmer atmosphere. There were more African-Americans when we were uptown. Downtown was a more diverse group.*

ILEAN DIXON



CLYDE WILDER



BUSTER BROWN  
& PHACE ROBERTS



TERRY MONAGHAN,  
RUBY REEVES & HARRY



SYLVAN 'CHARLIE'  
CHARLES



MARGARET BATIUCHOK  
& DEBORAH HUISKEN

*Photos courtesy of Mickey Davidson*

*On Sundays, I did go to Irving Plaza – that was bigger than Killer Joe. That was a lot of fun. At Wells we would eat with the big band and chill and have a wonderful time. We would do the electric slide to Killer Joe. We would go to Lucy's, then go over to the Cotton Club, or vice a versa. They both had live bands. That's what we did on Monday nights.*

CHAZZ YOUNG

*I went to Northern Lights every week on Mondays and the Cat Club and then Irving Plaza on Sunday for a while before I got hurt. I understand how we could offer this dance downtown and they got it because we weren't doing anything in our community. Frankie Manning was one of the top trainers who continued after Al Minns died. Teaching the people downtown.*

RUBY REEVES

*I didn't go uptown much because of the distance. The Cat Club was near my house. My first night I was asking a lot of cats to dance including Frankie, Sonny, Billy and George, none of them would dance with me. The first person that danced with me was a white boy. I started going to Irving Plaza every Sunday, which is where I first heard John Dokes sing. It was for my birthday and I was at Irving Plaza, but I knew John as a dancer first. People started coming from all over the world to Irving Plaza. It was the biggest thing in NY at the time. Black people say that whites took the dance away from us and I say no you threw it at them and they caught it. This dance is being done all over the world and I am a part of it.*

DAWN HAMPTON

*Northern Lights was a banquet room but it had a good floor and a bandstand. But it was not like Smalls which was a club with tables, a bar and dance floor. But Northern Lights was still someplace to dance after Smalls closed. That was the last time Billy Ricker was with us, matter of fact.*

NORMA MILLER

*At Norma [Miller]'s 60th birthday three couples performed, and she was one. They did that lift where the woman does a handstand on the man's shoulders, and she was there straight up in the air. I remember thinking – she's 60! At that point it clicked – wow these people are really a different kind of talent than the rest of us. I was stunned.*

ALICE MCINERNEY



*I went to the Cat Club; it was a different kind of energy. More of an integrated mix, more students than just the elders but at the same time the sharing that was most important. That is what is so beautiful about our culture of music and dance, the sharing and the openness and the evolving aspect of it.*

AMANIYEA PAYNE

*I went down to the Cat Club once or twice but not a lot. I felt less of a sense of belonging at the Cat Club that's probably why I didn't go out of my way to go back very often. It just felt like somebody else's thing. I loved Lucy's. I felt special coming to Lucy's. And it was in my neighborhood on top of that. Part of being in the neighborhood and having so much rich culture and there was some fabulous musicians. When Lucy's closed I haven't danced nearly as much. I've been down to Swing 46 a few times but it's just not the same. I don't feel motivated to go to the Cotton Club the way I did with the Harlem Renaissance Orchestra.*

BINTA

*I enjoyed the Cat Club so much because of the space; it generated a community of people from uptown and downtown. Uptown I learned about spacing and dance etiquette. Downtown in general the spaces were bigger so the possibility of expression was greater than what you could do uptown in smaller spaces.*

CLYDE WILDER

*I loved going up to Smalls Paradise – it was like dancing were the dance came from. I went to Smalls for about a year but down at the Cat Club I was becoming more educated hearing so many different bands. This whole group of people developed and I became involved not just to dance, helping to support the organizers and the events. I met a wide variety of people. Irving Plaza had a different feeling but I loved going there, the space was larger and the way it was laid out there were more places for people to hang out and watch the dancing. It translated very well from the Cat Club.*

CYNTHIA MILLMAN

*Uptown recreated places where people could come together and give the best of themselves. It was the best of myself that came out there. When I danced with one of the older guys I didn't have to know how to do anything. They would lead you right through it. Where else, in particular being white, would I get a chance to mix with these types of social dancers and learn from them?*

*New York Swing Dance Society events created an environment where we could interchange. It was very nice to be in a social environment where you didn't have to get high (drinking) to interact with people.*

JUDY PRITCHETT

*Downtown were folks whom I never would have seen fast dancing when I was growing up in the segregated South – white folk from all over the country and other parts of the world were swinging out, too!*

LONNETTA GAINES

*The people from uptown encouraged us to have our dances and they would come from uptown to downtown to all of the dances. We continued to go to Smalls and Northern Lights until it closed. Mama Lou invited George Lloyd and myself to judge at her contest, The Harvest Moon Ball. People admired each other's strengths so it was never a negative thing it was more sharing. I went to Wells but not as much.*

MARGARET BATIUCHOK

*I went to Irving Plaza a couple of times. Besides the usual older black guys from uptown I met a couple of white older guys like Ernie Smith who was a real fine dancer. I felt that I was dancing faster uptown and downtown it felt slower. I like up-tempo or dancing halftime I like that too.*

NAKIA

*Downtown has the number of people and a very diversified community of people. In general when we play downtown we have to be sensitive to playing more up-tempo, not as much Latin and less of a laid back style than we have uptown. It is about being sensitive to each community and being able within our repertoire to make everybody happy. The proof is when the dance floor is jumping.*

RON ALLEN

*The spirit of Lindy Hop is consistent. Watching the dance floor and seeing the joy that comes from it is the same as at the Cat Club in 1987. Technically the dance may have done different things.... It's always been a mixture of age and race and styles, consistently over the years. It's a pretty good mix of people. That's another thing I like about it – it's not just one type of folks but every type of folks. What other dance has such a variety?*

GEORGE GEE

## REFLECTIONS & INSIGHTS

The people, the music, old and young together created a rainbow of personalities, dance styles, dance expectations and attitudes. People dancing for their own reasons allows each person to learn and develop in ways that are good for them personally. Frankie drew inspiration in creating his teaching style and gained further raw material in addition to what he lived as a professional and social dancer.

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*When I first approached Al to teach he said was I crazy people don't care about this. I said "we will make them care; this should not die with your generation".*  
*When I approached Frankie he looked at me in the same way; he said people don't care about this anymore. What they were saying was people in their community had moved on to other music and other dance forms.*  
*I asked them if it would be a problem teaching this form to predominately white people. They both looked at me and said they would like to share their knowledge of this form and they didn't have a problem with who they taught as long as they are willing to learn.*

LARRY SCHULTZ

*I was doing this type of dancing since I was a kid; it was fun and easy. You just wake up and dance, where I come from you didn't go to dancing school you did your dancing on the street corner, pick up steps from each other and develop your own style.*

CHARLIE MEADE

*Crazy Charlie would ask us to dance and we would say no just so that we could watch him go out on the floor and dance with himself that would crack us up. Crazy Charlie had four shirts with him when he came.*

KELLY LLOYD

*Going to the Cat Club helped me as a person because dance is important to me. I came up in that time when the women dressed and the men dressed; everyone dressed well. They did not come out in jeans. It wasn't all about air steps it was about dancing. During the war with Frankie and the other men being gone the women had to learn how to lead. Frankie said that when he was in the service he had to learn how to follow. A lot of people think it's about a man woman thing it's not, it's about lead and follow and as a result of the war more women knew how to lead and more men know how to follow.*

DAWN HAMPTON

*George Lloyd was a smooth swinger. He wasn't an exhibition dancer but he had a real close swing and he would have a hunch in his back. Calvin was always like the gentleman on the dance floor. Couples that dance a lot with each other grow on each other and find the groove like Billy & Shirley Doig or Charlie Meade and Lynn. It's a characteristic when you're a person who is dancing to dance eloquently and politely. That's the one thing I miss when we would go out dancing everybody would dance well and look nice. The only place that I see people dancing and acting the way we used to be is when I go to DC or Baltimore with the hand dancers.*

NORMA MILLER

*I only found one person that dances the same way Bill did. A senior citizen group in Brooklyn every Friday they have some good music and there is one person there that dances like Bill. I miss him. I am 88 and still dancing.*

SHIRLEY DOIG

*The older leaders were very smooth, and very musical, and very gentlemanly, courteous, and I guess I learned from them, and everyone else who was there, that this is a way of life, listening to and dancing to music is a great way to spend your time, part of their lifestyle.*

ALICE MCINERNEY

*I enjoyed dancing with George Lloyd. We knew each other by “hey baby”. Sonny Mayberry was the one I was closest with because our energies were alike; we had the same kind of rhythmic flow. I liked dancing with Calvin. For me, being with people like Mama Lou Parks, Norma and Frankie, Chazz, Al Minns, Billy Ricker, is to walk in the footsteps of and alongside of the greats; it is truly a blessing.*

AMANIYEA PAYNE

*I was intrigued seeing the dancers dance at Jazz Mobile outdoor concerts, hoofers like Buster Brown and Chuck Green deepens my appreciation for cultural art and the support of it. I loved dancing with Charlie, Malcolm, Calvin, Tucker and Ice. I enjoyed dancing with all the old guys.*

BINTA

*It was a working dance relationship that impacted my life. These relationships included: Chazz, Stony, Amaniyea, Darlene, Billy Rector, Norma, Frankie, Mama Lou and the jazz dancers, Margaret Batiuchok, and Al Minns.*

CLYDE WILDER

*I really love dancing, I love the music, I love getting into the dance with the music . I danced with other people but it wasn't like dancing with a partner and I love dancing with a partner doing swing dance.*

CYNTHIA MILLMAN

*I think Al Higgins was, the oldest guy I danced with back then. He was about 10 years older than Frankie. Frankie, Leroy Griffin, and Buster Brown were my favorite partners.*

JUDY PRITCHETT

*I danced a lot with Charlie Meade right from the start. I did my first performance with him. I was terrified. I danced with Frankie a fair amount and George Lloyd once or twice. Early on I figured out that it was great to have that opportunity.*

KAREN GOLDSTEIN

*There was West Indian Charlie. He came to the club with a suitcase with a change of clothes, 'cause he knew he was going to get sweaty. There was Sonny Mayberry – cool and easy when he danced; and Buster Brown, the renowned tap dancer, who loved to throw in a little Philly Dog. The sartorially splendid Luther, showing off his latest steps; and Calvin Johnson, who combines complicated ballroom movements with the swing dance movements: There's Clyde Wilder, dances with the power of an African Orisha; and Malcolm Prince, who translates his musicality into dance . . . and Brother Leroy Griffin, who manages to fit in crowd-pleasing solos and winks at the lookers-on as he leads you around the floor with effortless ease.*

LONNETTA GAINES

*The basis of my thesis was how the Lindy Hop encouraged individual styling. I wrote about four different dancers that I was dancing with. Frankie, George, Charlie, and Tom Lewis; how they all danced differently and they were all great.*

MARGARET BATIUCHOK

Warren White usually gave me my first dance at Smalls. He would whisper in my ear “Baby let me lead”. I would say to myself “relax, trust, feel and listen”. Brother Leroy needed gentle energy to keep him safe health-wise and I learned to change my energy to blend with his. Charlie Meade, Calvin Johnson, Buster Brown, Sonny Mayberry, Malcolm Prince, Ernie Smith, Dennis Charles' brother and C. Scoby Stroman from Brooklyn taught me how to be a woman on the dance floor.



*I was so fortunate that I had people like Buster Brown, Sonny Mayberry, even Harold Nicholas come through and I had a chance to dance with them, Ernie Smith, Buster Brown, Frankie's best friend Scottie and older women like Yvonne Washington, Mussetta Kasta. They all taught me what they felt I needed to know. It was a treat to dance with the elders and seeing people coming out to the club in Harlem like Geoffrey Holder, Gregory Hines, and I got a chance to dance with them. I could try different things with my partner sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't. It wasn't a selfish dance so everybody shared with each other. It makes me feel so good inside it takes me to a whole other level.*

NAKIA

*Watching the dancers dance to the music was terrific because most of the guys in the early times of the band played at the Savoy. It's wonderful that there is another generation to keep this music and dance alive. I think this music will go on; it will have ebb and flow but I think future generations will continue to rediscover this music that's what makes it a classic.*

DOC VOLLMAR

## THE FRANKIE IMPACT

Frankie's leadership in the '80s came from the teaching style he developed. Frankie has been a major force in institutionalizing the Lindy Hop so it is enjoyed and appreciated by the world community. He created a system of teaching that works all over the globe no matter the reason for dancing, may it be socially, competitive or professional expressions. Frankie's future impact will be expressed in many ways based on how each individual blends Frankie's influence on them into their ordinary lives. To me, the strongest reason for Frankie's success was expressed best by Judy Pritchett: Frankie also took from the younger generation, and let himself be changed by it.

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*I used to see Frankie at the Savoy all the time as part of Whitey's Lindy Hoppers. When I saw Frankie again at the clubs, especially Smalls and the Cat Club, it reminded me very much of the Savoy Ballroom. Every place Frankie would go for dancing Bill and I would go. We were always invited to his birthday. The girl Frankie was dating, Judy, she would always invite us.*

SHIRLEY DOIG

*Frankie and I liked doing things together like going to a movie going to dinner, going to parties, dancing, going to jazz clubs, swing clubs, cruises – that's how much fun we just had being together. When we would do the Shim Sham together on stage, it was pure fun. He would light up the stage. I would look over and see him tear up the floor. His memory will last with me until I leave the planet.*

CHAZZ YOUNG

*I love Frankie as an individual, a very nice man; he would give me pointers about things. You can see people who Frank taught by the look of their style.*

NIKIA

*Frankie for us who came from an African dance background he was our Baba (father). He was the biggest name known to the swing world. To be in the camps of the mummies and daddies of swing to be recognized as their children I felt like a star. They were happy to know I was there to show continuum of our legacy of dance even through the sharing with other cultures was going on.*

AMANIYEA PAYNE

*In 1987 I started working with Frankie. He was a very nice guy. There was a separate Saturday class, the Sandra Cameron performance group, and he came to teach stuff – he taught aerials. He was what, 70, flipping all these women. Other guys were saying 'I can do that,' but they couldn't.*

ALICE MCINERNEY

*I know Frankie from my job at the post office. My biggest influence from Frankie was seeing him on the dance floor but more importantly in films. On the dance floor, I was impressed with his physical skills, rhythmic phrasing, his appreciation for partnering, the conversation that he would produce between he and his partner no matter what their dance level, and his passion for this dance. The collaboration between my partner, the music, and the love of the dance are things I have incorporated into my dancing style and being.*

CLYDE WILDER

*I remember the first time I spoke with him was at one of those late '80s dance weekends upstate. Frankie asked all these questions and I was surprised; I had danced with him and been intimidated, but this man was interested in getting to know me.*

KAREN GOLDSTEIN

*Where ever Frankie was there was a party. He had such a range of conversational styles: he could be a great listener, he could be a wonderful performer, he loved a good joke and liked keeping everybody laughing. To see a man his age enjoy life so much it really changed how I feel about old age; I can see the possibility of enjoying old age. It gives me a brighter sense of the future. Thanks to Frankie and swing dancing I know some pretty nice people.*

CYNTHIA MILLMAN

*Brother Leroy grew up with Norma Miller and that was the reason I got to dance with Frankie – Brother Leroy just swung me over to him! Such fun!*

LONNETTA GAINES

*Because of our involvement with swing dancing we got to know Frankie. One year we were in Sweden and we played in Herräng, I was surprised when we got there because Frankie Manning was there. It was nice to see him. I was impressed with how far people came from all over the world to Herräng to study and dance. This was sometime in the '90s.*

DOC VOLLMAR

*Frankie Manning was great because when you watched him move he had graceful movements that blended right into the music. It was easy to watch Frankie dance and to play accents off of his moves. The footwork of the dancers in the past was more intricate then the footwork being done today as it relates to the music.*

FRED STATON

*Frankie Manning would come to us and say "you all are not ready yet, but keep working on it." When he'd come out on the floor with that big smile then we knew if we have it or not and he finally loved the way we played Shiny Stockings; he liked the Frank Foster arrangement. That is how we fed off of the dancers and we were the living testament of It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing. Before we started performing at the Cat Club we did a performance up in the Catskills with the New York Swing Dance Society. Frankie called and reminded us to make sure our repertoire was 100% swing, stay away from the Latin and watch how the people were dancing. After that job we started being invited downtown to the Cat Club, Irving Plaza and we still come down to the church at 72nd St. today when invited.*

RON ALLEN

*I learned about Frankie Manning by watching him. Hearing Frankie do the call of the Shim Sham was the first time I really understood how that dance went and the meaning of it was clear in how he interacted with the music and movement.*

JOHN SCOTT

*I think Frankie was one of the nicest guys I had met in a long while. I told a girl once that no matter where she goes she should get a dance with Frankie; he brought the Lindy single handedly into her world.*

CALVIN JOHNSON

*Frankie and I have different style of dancing. We weren't schooled dancers we danced from the street. At first Frankie couldn't count and I still can't count. He said he was just learning how to count because he was teaching.*

CHARLIE MEADE

*Even at the time when Frankie was a celebrity he was my friend and my partner so I got a chance to dance with him. He was such a special person he could light up the room in his own way. We got to be with Frankie in a more intimate way. People all over the world got to know him but it wasn't the same as in the beginning. This was his hometown and people. It was so lucky of us to have him in that time.*

MARGARET BATIUCHOK

*Frankie developed into an amazing teacher. Frankie had an amazing impact on this new young generation that is mostly white and very young. This celebration of Frankie 100 is quite a big order, people from all over the world. This Internet is truly a mind-boggling thing for a person of my age and the impact it has had on this dance, the access to information people these days is mind-boggling but it's great.*

LARRY SCHULTZ



AT LUCY'S

I got a chance to grow and share with Frankie as he learned how to break movement down and communicate it. I saw him observe, adjust and lead people into a journey of joy through movement. He always looked out for me wherever we were. Even if we weren't on the same journey he would make sure I was in and safe, then I would be on my own.

Like others, I got my assignments from Frankie. We each must interpret Frankie's impact on us as individuals, figure how we use his love, wisdom and steps to make others smile the way he did for us. I hope we all make him proud.

We're Dedicated to Keeping the Spirit of Frankie Alive!



Roaring Twenties Lawn Party  
at Castle Hill on the Crane Estate



SUNDAY JULY 27, 2014

Ipswich, Massachusetts

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*Charlie Meade, Debbie Elkins, Frankie Manning, New York City 1989*  
*Photo by Ralph Gabriner*







*Frankie Manning and the koala  
"Lulu" in Adelaide, Australia in 1997  
Tourist photo courtesy of Judy Pritchett*





# FRANKIE INTERNATIONAL

*Nalla Kim*

## PROLOGUE

I'm a Lindy Hopper living in Seoul, Korea. Unfortunately, Frankie Manning was never here before he died. But, now Korea has the biggest swing scene in the world. And many dancers here still admire his passion and love of the dance; many local instructors teach and spread Frankie's favorite moves as well as his legacy and the origins of Lindy Hop.

What do you think the most valuable legacy Frankie left us? Energetic aerals or great choreographies or his favorite moves? The most important legacy he left was not only the original Lindy Hop but also his heart, warmth, and his joyful energy. I've seen many videos of Frankie and other legendary Lindy Hoppers. I can easily find his big smiles in all videos and many photos.

## FRANKIE MANNING, AMBASSADOR OF LINDY HOP

Frankie was really the Ambassador of Lindy Hop. He travelled all over the world – including USA, Europe, Asia and Oceania – almost every weekend to spread the Lindy Hop. Frankie wanted nothing more than to see the whole world Lindy Hopping. He was delighted when he was asked to teach, perform, or choreograph in a new country, and he appreciated the love and admiration accorded him by those discovering the joys of swing dance and music.

Let's follow his footprints and listen to stories from some of the people he traveled to see.

## SWING CAMP CATALINA

The first time Erin flew Frankie to California to teach at the Pasadena Ballroom Dance Association. (which she co-owns with her sister, Tami), he brought along his scrapbook filled with news clippings and photographs from his days with Whitey's Lindy Hoppers. There were news articles

and advertisements for his performances at the renowned "Cotton Club," and photos from his European tours. It was then that the Stevens sisters realized how famous Frankie had been in the 1930s, and how important the Lindy Hop had once been. To get their students to learn it, they labeled their Swing classes in the 1980s, "East Coast, Jitterbug, Lindy Hop." Tami explains, "we had to trick them into learning Lindy Hop." But the students came.

From 1986 forward, Frankie made twice-annual visits to Pasadena where he taught Erin and Tami in private lessons and conducted workshops for their students. Erin says that while Al Minns taught her tricks and aerals, it was Frankie who taught her the heart and soul of the Lindy Hop. Frankie always referred to the Stevens' as "my California Family."

As the resurgence of Swing Dance blossomed in the 1990s, Erin and Tami hosted their annual June event (to some, the Granddaddy of the American Swing Camps), Swing Camp Catalina, bringing thousands of swing dancers from around the world together on Catalina Island (1994-2004). In the magical setting of the historic Casino Ballroom at water's edge, amid the twinkling lights of Avalon harbor, the camp included a roster of international teachers, with Frankie as the yearly 'headliner'. The island is a one-hour boat trip from the Los Angeles harbor, and the Stevens' used six locations for the classes there, often barging dance flooring and equipment across the channel. One year, having barged over and set up a building-sized tent, Frankie teased, "Look! The circus is coming to town!"

For Frankie, coming to Swing Camp Catalina was like an annual island vacation. He had his own house, which he shared with his son Chazz, and his own golf cart for scooting around the island. He was a fan of the Los Angeles Lakers basketball team, and loved watching them in the playoffs on his rental house big-screen television.

Catalina 1999 (Frankie's 85th Birthday) saw the largest attendance at the camp with 1,800 students registered, and an additional 460 attendees at the Saturday night dance in the Casino Ballroom. Erin recalls standing on the stage with Frankie that year, looking over the crowd, and asking: "Did you ever think we'd be standing here, looking at a crowd like this from all over the world?" Frankie shook his head and answered, "Not in my wildest dreams." That year,

Frankie had an extended birthday party, starting in Munich, then NYC at the Roseland, then San Francisco and then Catalina. On the camp video for that year, he's on the Casino Ballroom stage (that in its glory played host to the big Swing orchestras) extending his arms as though giving the entire audience a giant hug in response to them singing him Happy Birthday, one of the many moments that displayed his loving heart. It's amazing to think that Frankie travelled like that for most of the year, in a different city or continent each weekend and always with that generous smile and laugh.

## INSPIRING TEACHER FRANKIE

Sylvia Sykes and Jonathan Bixby invited Frankie for a teaching workshop in Santa Barbara 1987. It was a smaller scene, but he brought high energy and enthusiasm every year.

The workshops were attended by seasoned veteran dancers as well as beginners. They would begin a session 2 weeks before his workshop weekend, and urge their beginners to attend just to experience his joy and love of dancing. Beginner dancers would be reluctant because all they knew was a basic 6-count, but Sylvia and Jonathan offered refunds if students did not enjoy it or felt overwhelmed. And they never had to give a refund! Frankie encouraged all attendees, young, old, experienced or rookies, to enjoy and learn. By the end of the day everyone was swinging out, peckin', doing the low down, knee slap and smiling ear to ear. He let everyone feel the joy of Lindy Hop, move to the music with a partner, and not worry about perfection.

The workshop weekend also included a talk from Frankie. Year after year he regaled them with stories that amused and encouraged the students, bringing them into the Lindy Hop community.

*Aside from all he taught me about dancing, I learned a great deal about life from Frankie. He showed me how not to sweat the small stuff, and how to pick what is actually important.*

*A story I always relate about him: We were at an event together early in the revival. The students were dancing... and not very well. The swing outs were terrible and the level quite low. I asked him what he thought/felt about his life work ending up like this. He said it was great "look at how they are all smiling and having a great time swinging out. That's what's important." He was a master at enabling all levels and talents to enjoy and participate in the Lindy world.*

**Sylvia Sykes**

## "MEMORY LANE" AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

Frankie made many trips to Australia. Some included visits to places in New Zealand and Australia where he had worked for Hollywood Hotel Revue in 1938-9 with 8 Big Apple Dancers – Willamae Ricker and Snookie Beasley, Esther Washington and Jerome Williams, Eunice Callen and Billy Ricker, and Lucille Middleton and Frankie. Hollywood Hotel Revue had over 60 entertainers but the 8 Big Apple Dancers were the only black performers in the show.

Judy Pritchett, Frankie's longtime companion, remembers their visit to Brisbane in 1997. Host Wayne Blair arranged for Frankie to visit the theater in Auckland, New Zealand at which he had played when it was called His Majesty's Theatre. They toured backstage, through the orchestra, and on-stage, with Frankie sharing his memories as they went. The empty theatre filled with the enthusiastic 1938 audience and performers, especially the crazy Lindy Hoppers. Frankie remembered a scene where he and another Lindy Hopper sat in a rowboat with their backs to the audience while the singer sang a sad love song. They made funny faces at the singer to get her to laugh, as she struggled to maintain the mood of the song. When Frankie was teaching in Canberra that same year, they went to the National Library and found reviews of the Lindy Hoppers in Australian newspapers. Frankie did not live in the past, but he thoroughly enjoyed these trips down "memory lane."

## BOOMERANG COMES BACK

Roger Schmidlin and Janet Tolletson founded the swing dance scene in Perth in 1998, and invited Frankie starting in 2001. They remember emailing Judy to ask if it was possible, and receiving a handwritten Christmas card from Frankie confirming that he would be delighted to visit them in Western Australia. They were thrilled and couldn't believe it.

They took him to Cottesloe beach to have fish and chips, and remember, 'he loved sitting there among us eating his chips out of some paper and watching the sunset. The workshop he did at the Swing Factory was just amazing'.

During the workshop they made time for Frankie to talk about his life and answer questions. Someone asked, “What is the difference between Lindy Hop and Jive?” He answered with a big grin, ‘Jive was a word that we used for someone that cannot dance’.



*The organizers of Perth Workshop 2001 @ SwingFactory Perth, Frankie Manning, Judy Pritchett, Roger Schmidlin, Janet Tolifson  
Photo by Roger Schmidlin*

The next day at a picnic in the park. Roger wanted to show Frankie a few real Aussie things so they taught him to throw a boomerang. He tried a few times but always threw the boomerang into the ground. Greg, who brought the boomerangs, stepped in to show him and threw the boomerang as hard as he could. Says Roger: ‘Boy, it flew ... and it came back ... Watch out Frankie!! ... Duck ... The boomerang missed Frankie by a few millimeters; he must have felt the draft. Frankie didn’t move at all and couldn’t understand their worry.

**Roger said,**

*We had a wonderful time with Frankie and Judy. It was just an inspiration. We are so thankful to have had this opportunity, and thank Frankie and Judy for making it possible. Frankie visited them again several times.*

## MELBOURNE

Frankie also taught in Melbourne. This story is from Scott Cupit, a founding member of Swing Patrol which Scott and Claudia Funder started in Melbourne in 1998. Their first venue, the Rising Sun Hotel in south Melbourne, had just 23 students. Their focus was teaching the joy of the dance like Frankie.

Scott had met Frankie in 1998 at Camp Catalina. He says he will always remember the standing ovation given to Frankie when he entered the ballroom. He was impressed at the respect given Frankie by every single person at the event.

He marveled at Frankie’s performance with Chazz that just oozed joy. He spoke with Frankie and was impressed at how humble he was, deflecting the adoration and just enjoying the moment with those around him.

**Scott said,**

*Swing Patrol invited Frankie & Judy to come to Melbourne in 2002. It was the best thing we ever did.*

Their time with Frankie included a BBQ on the beach and history chats. They treasured driving Frankie around and fell in love with his ability to wear his greatness lightly. His joy for people and the dance shone and Scott remembers feeling that this is a mentor that we should base good leadership on. Frankie’s advice from all those years ago – and listening to his talks – gave Scott insights to steer his dancers in a positive direction. He feels fortunate to belong to a community with a leader whose legacy is obvious wherever you look.

## BOOGIE WOOGIE MET LINDY HOP IN MUNICH, GERMANY

Many Boogie Woogie dancers also dance Lindy Hop, especially in Europe. Lindy Hop and Boogie Woogie are siblings, and have many similarities.

Boogie-Bären Munich e.V. is a non-profit dance organization founded in 1989 to spread Boogie Woogie and Lindy Hop in Munich and across Germany. They were one of the only clubs in Germany providing regular Lindy Hop classes, and were also involved in building other scenes all around Germany and Europe. They host one of the longest-running swing dance camps (over 25 years) inspired by the “mother of all camps”, Herräng, and welcome Boogie and Lindy dancers and teachers from all over the world,

In the beginning of the ‘90s, first “German Boogie Dance Pioneers” (Marcus Koch, Barbl Kaufer, Claudia Paulus, Harald Gärttner, Siegfried Hausotter, Eva-Maria Schmidt, Alexandra and Hubert Winkel, Veronika Demetrio, Gerlinde Farr, and others) went to Sweden for Herräng Dance Camp. They met Frankie and fell in love with him, inviting him to Germany in 1994. Because BBDC is in May, it often coincided with Frankie’s birthday, but he always accepted their invitation.

Core to the dance camp is the Frankie Award ceremony, to honor persons/groups that have been dedicated to swing dance and music over many years. It goes without



saying that Frankie was the first laureate, in 1994. Jean Veloz, Norma Miller, the Original Rhythm Hotshots, Dawn Hampton, Judy Pritchett, and Cynthia Millman are also Laureates.

Frankie was a regular guest at the camp, always sharing his joy, knowledge, and stories. Every year, they had a special birthday gift for him – including a “Mount Jazzmore” cake, and a Blue Zoot Suit – to thank him for coming and his passion in spreading the dance we all love so much.

At the end of the ‘90s, the club reorganized and Frankie had hip surgery, but they brought him back in 2004 to introduce a new generation to Frankie. Many dancers came to meet Frankie for the first time – from the young Slovenian scene, Austria, Switzerland etc. They knew he had pain in his hips, but he told them ‘The less I have to walk the more I can dance!’

That year he taught his “Shim Sham” the very Frankie way with a lot of big laughter and calls in front of 100 dancers. Everyone wanted to be with him, one more time. Unfortunately, that was the last time they saw him at Boogie-Bären, tho as Frankie wished, they kept going with dedication and passion. Keeping passion – the recipe to inspire other people and to get them on the dance floor – alive was one of Frankie’s biggest influences. ‘We promoted the publication of his biography in Germany, inviting Cynthia Millman to the camp. Norma Miller continued to keep Frankie alive when she came in 2011’.

## SING SING SINGAPORE!

Frankie visited Singapore many times, and he was one of the most important influences on their fledgling community. He opened their first studio in 1998 and visited almost every year thereafter. Only hip replacement surgery kept him away, and then he was back better than ever the next year. Like the Pied Piper, he brought all the dancers (new and old) onto stage.

Sing Lim, founding director of Jitterbugs Singapore and close friend of Frankie, taught and performed several times with him. She said, “While I could teach the moves and poses, there was nothing like getting the information from the source. Watching Frankie dance, hearing his stories, and learning how to move to his music was worth a million hours of re-watching VHS tapes”.

Sing can’t forget performing the Shim Sham with Frankie at the Ritz Carlton, Singapore in 1998. They had a big band playing and she asked them to prepare *Stomping at the Savoy*. However, when the band struck up at a leisurely 130 bpm, Frankie didn’t like it. He made them stop, then he



*Frankie Manning dances with Jean Veloz at the Boogie-Baeren Swing Ball 1998. Photo courtesy of Boogie-Baeren Munich e.V.*

counted them in at a nice crisp 180bpm that put a big smile on the drummer’s face.

Singapore was a small community (30~90 people) so they had great contact time with Frankie, at meals or at the dances. They heard the count from The Man himself and saw what a real shimmy looks like. His presence validated them as part of the global Lindy Hop community, in a pre-Facebook, pre-YouTube, pre-PC era.

SEA Jam, the first Lindy Hop camp in Asia, started in 2002. The inspiration was camps like Herräng and Swing Masters Jam (run by Jitterbugs UK). The name was a pun on Sing’s favorite song “C Jam Blues” and the region – South-East Asia; plus the seaside was a recurring feature of the camp. The first SEA Jam was held at Changi Sailing Club. Guests were Frankie, Judy Pritchett, Frida Segerdahl, Fredrick Åberg, Tami Stevens and Scott Price. Approximately 60 Singaporeans attended, and remember Frankie happily sitting in the tropical seaside evening, by a seafood barbeque. He loved chilly crab! Also, he was happy to see



*Above: Frankie at the Boogie-Baeren Swing Ball 1996. Below left: Frankie in his Birthday Zoot Suit at the Boogie-Baeren Swing Ball 1996. Below centre: Frankie dances the Shim Sham at the Boogie-Baeren Swing Ball 1999. Below right: Frankie Manning receives the first Frankie Award in 1994. Photos courtesy of Boogie-Baeren Munich e.V.*





how far-reaching his work had been and to see how people so far removed from him in age, culture, and geography could be so connected with him through dance.

During one SEA Jam session Frankie talked about the atmosphere at the Savoy –

*If you could dance, you danced the moment you walked in. If you couldn't dance, you'll find your feet would start tappin', your fingers would start snappin', and your head would start boppin'. And before you know it, you were dancing.*

The Singapore swing scene is still not that big, but it's special, the first Swingin' city in Asia. Frankie's students there still remember his big smile and shimmy. Sing said

*We miss Frankie in Singapore. We miss his smile, his energy. But in another way, he never left here. Every time we swing out to Shiny Stockings, I hear his laugh.*



At opening of Jitterbugs Singapore, Singapore, March 1999. (from left) Fen Tonge, Sing Lim, Frankie Manning, Erin Stevens, Andrew Vassiliou. Photo courtesy. Below: Frankie Manning and Erin Stevens and Lindy Hop Students. Jitterbugs Singapore. March 1998. Photos courtesy of Lim Sing Yuen, Jitterbugs Singapore Photos courtesy of Lim Sing Yuen, Jitterbugs Singapore



## LINDY HOP ARMY IN JAPAN

Frankie was first in Asia in 1945 at the end of World War II, serving in the U.S. Army. He danced a bit during the war, including USO shows in Japan. It meant a lot to him to be invited back to Japan as a professional dancer and teacher.

In 1997, Japanese dancer Hiro Yamada had ordered Frankie's instructional dance videos through the Internet;



Frankie, Sing, Andrew, and Mike are dancing Shim Sham to the big band Crescent Jazz Orchestra. Photo: Courtesy Tokyo Swing Dance Society

the first order from Japan according to Judy. Soon after that, he brought Frankie to Tokyo, the first time in 1998 in collaboration with famed jazz critic Masahisa Segawa and Toshio Watari, the owner of several ballroom dance studios. Frankie taught with Sing Lim, and the Tokyo Swing Dance Society was established after that visit, with Frankie an Advisory Board member.

For the first Japanese Lindy Hop workshops, there were few Lindy Hoppers; however, more than 80 students ultimately joined the event, because of Frankie.

**Hiro said,**

*He is the man. He is the real person. The real thing is strong. I learned Swingin' is Believing from him. I learned what Swing Music is from Frankie.*

**Hiro once said to Frankie:**

*Male Lindy Hop leaders at the Savoy Ballroom look dressed very well, i.e. suits, shirts and tie. However in New York City like Tokyo, I think it must have been hot on the dance floor because air-conditioning was not so popular in the '20s, '30s, and maybe even '40s. How did those well-dressed dancers dance there?*

**Frankie replied**

*Hiro, people changed their shirts many times a night!*



*Sing Lim also remembers the first visiting to Tokyo with Frankie. Hiro took us to tiny jazz bar that housed a full big band that was amazing! Frankie really enjoyed his visit and teaching there.*

Frankie went back to Tokyo in 2000 for his official 86th birthday, which was endorsed by the US Embassy in Japan. A gang came from the United States to help celebrate: Judy Pritchett, Chazz Young, Mickey Davidson (who taught with Chazz), Ken Watanabe who assisted Frankie in his classes by



*Frankie's special birthday cake decorated with Frankie dancing over Mt. Fuji. Photo: Courtesy Tokyo Swing Dance Society*

demonstrating with Azusa Yamada, Hiro's wife, and Craig Thompson. Jun Maruta and Simone Coonrod also taught Lindy Hop. George Gee was an MC, panelist, and guest band leader.

There were many wonderful moments that weekend. Three groups of Japanese dancers performed, and Mickey and Chazz did a number to *Posin'*. Chazz remembers the opening party on Friday, May 26th at Boss in Shibuya, when the Kansas City Band played one of his favorite tunes, *Drop Me Off in Harlem*. Chazz was born and raised in Harlem, and the song reminded him of how jumping the neighborhood was. There were classes all weekend and a panel discussion on Saturday. Two bands, the Crescent Jazz Orchestra and the Kansas City Band, played Sunday night at the Tokyo American Club. Frankie did a birthday dance with eighty-six partners while sitting in a chair because he had twisted his knee before the trip!

Hiro and TSDS built on Frankie's visits by importing Brits Ryan Francois (whom Frankie considered his artistic son), and Jenny Thomas in 2002 and 2011. And in 2012, **Frankie Manning: Ambassador of Lindy Hop** was translated into Japanese by jazz enthusiast Nammy Ogata. Now there are many Lindy Hoppers in Japan – including Tokyo, Osaka and Yokohama – and swingin' all over Asia. Dom Arigato, Frankie's Lindy Hop Army!

## WILD VIDEOS (SEATTLE, WA)

Nancyanna and Walter Dill started Wild Week the week after Christmas in 1990 at Fort Worden, and had Frankie teach many times, the first in 1991. They were the first to have Chazz do workshops with Frankie, and report that it was "really glorious" watching Frankie & Chazz swing it together on stage and in workshops.

In 1994, at Frankie's 80th birthday party in NYC, Nancyanna and Walter asked Frankie if he wanted to create an instructional video series and music compilation of his favorite tunes. He agreed, and Erin Stevens agreed to partner him. They met with Sony Music Special Products and produced the *Really Swingin'* CD of his favorite tunes in collaboration with Walter's company, Living Traditions. Walter had extracted a list of Frankie's favorite tunes at a chat at their kitchen table; a list Walter still has, written with pink marker, somewhere in storage.

They hired jazz pianist Barney McClure to create tunes for the videos that "felt like" Frankie's favorites because it was cost-prohibitive to license the actual music. The first time Frankie put the tunes on his WalkMan, and quietly listened to the music, they were really concerned. After a while, Frankie smiled, and said, "I liked the music. Whew!!" They had recorded four tunes at two different tempos at the Sage Arts recording studio in Arlington – one for teaching and one for demonstrating.

Rosemary (Hemp) Langford was a producer on KIRO TV in Seattle at that time, and happened to be in their dance classes. They asked if she wanted to produce the videos and she did, so KIRO TV agreed to allow Rosemary to edit the videos at the station and in return were the initial broadcasters of the documentary. She found the best camera people, sound guy, boom operator, etc. Guy Caridi did quite a bit of background work on the videos, and is responsible for various funny little moments in the editing.

They then rented the Ballard Oddfellows Hall in Seattle for two weeks. The first week was used to build a grand ballroom set, including walls that went up to the 16' ceilings. Walter designed the set, worked with a scenic artist who painted it, and put it together with friends who had construction experience.

They flew Frankie and Erin to Seattle for the second week, and produced 4 instructional videos (*Lindy Hop 1, 2, & 3* along with *Shim Sham* and a documentary, *Swingin' at the Savoy*).

# SUPER HERO IN ARIZONA

(STEVE CONRAD, ARIZONA LINDY HOP SOCIETY)

Many Lindy Hoppers first met Frankie at Swing Camp Catalina; Steve Conrad, the founder of Arizona Lindy Hop Society, is one. In 1996 the room was filled with about 500 people learning from the humble Master of Lindy Hop. Steve was taken by his charisma and passion for the dance and, tho he did not know it then, his life would be forever changed. The rest of the camp he took any class that Frankie taught, then asked if Frankie would come to Arizona. Frankie agreed so Steve brought him on Martin Luther King Weekend, January 1998. He had no idea what to expect, he only knew he wanted other people to see Frankie's passion for the dance. A local newspaper put Frankie on the front page before the workshop which resulted in over 500 people showing up for classes and 2,000 people for the dances over two nights. Frankie created joyous excitement for learning to dance, and many people at that workshop continued to dance for many years. Frankie came to Phoenix 13 times. Each year he had something new to teach or a new story to share.

Year after year Frankie taught new people about Lindy Hop and treating a woman like a queen by bowing to her. Students loved his chivalry and of course the ladies were always taken in by his charm.

## **Steve says:**

*Frankie had the greatest impact on our scene and really was the greatest ambassador of the dance. He felt swing music in his bones and in his soul and he loved when others would "light up".*

*When I was a little kid I loved comic books and superheroes. I always wanted a super power like the characters in those stories except I wanted the power to heal people who were in pain. The closest I have ever come to having that ability was from Frankie teaching me to dance and imparting to me the love of teaching others. Thanks to Frankie Manning I will continue to try to bring joy to people's lives through dance.*

# THOMAS BLACHARZ, MONTPELLIER (NOW IN NYC)

*Frankie used to come year after to Montpellier and I am very thankful to Swing Cat Cie for making this happen. Frankie used to teach and tell stories like he used to everywhere. But here's the most unexpected thing that ever happened between me and Frankie. I was teaching a Lindy Hop workshop in Casablanca (Morocco), On the way back, I had to leave really*

*early from the airport and my flight had to be re-scheduled to fly into Toulouse to take a new train to Montpellier. I was very tired as you can imagine, so when I finally got in the train I fell asleep until I hit the final destination. When I woke up Frankie was sitting next to me. I was speechless; it was Simply Unreal. He gave me one of his smiles and said hi; it was before I've even got personally introduced to him. Frankie was going to the Swing Cat Cie School in Montpellier where I was supposed to do a talk.*

*I learned a couple of variations and rhythm steps that I could not even name but that I can clearly remember. To be honest, I didn't realize how much these things would affect my dancing and my teaching today. I also learnt the Big Apple Routine from Frankie himself at Beantown.*

*Clearly a feeling that says: He's the man. My English wasn't so good when I first met him. So, I believe it was more spiritual.*

*My best moment was definitely when Max, Annie & I got invited to teach for the Swing Jam in Phoenix, AZ alongside Chazz & Frankie for their yearly event, about a month before he died. Especially, some discussions we had while we were having dinner after the event was over. We shared, learnt, dreamt & laughed all a lot. And this will always be remembered. Thank you, Steve Conrad.*

# GENTLEMAN FRANKIE

Aurelie Tye had a very special moment with Frankie in the summer of 1998. Invited by the New York Swing Dance Society to teach the lesson before social dancing, she and her partner Tony brought their Boston performance group and performed at the dance as well. She had just gone out on the floor to dance with one of the guys in the group when the band started to play Shiny Stockings. Frankie walked out to Aurelie and asked if he could cut in. She doesn't remember the specifics of the dance too much as she was so excited to be dancing with Frankie, especially to one of his favorite songs! As the song ended, Frankie thanked her and escorted her back to her friends. It still makes her very happy to think of that night.

Tony and Aurelie's first Beantown Camp was 1997, and Frankie's first year attending 1998. Frankie wasn't always able to do the full week, however they wanted him to always be as much a part of Beantown as he was able. They spent a lot of time with Frankie over those years, including many presentations with Cynthia Millman telling his stories.

*The values that Frankie passed on have always been something that we have tried to emulate, in our dance or communities, and in life. There have often been times of frustration where Frankie has been, and continues to be, a*



*Frankie Greeted by Maori Dancer, Wellington, New Zealand, 2002. Photo by Joanna Matsis*

*tremendous source of inspiration. Frankie always looked at the positives. He seemed to be one of those people that did not sweat the small stuff! How did he handle all the traveling? He had an easygoing way of looking at it! He'd get to the airport really early so he never had to stress over being on time or dealing with long lines or complications. He managed all of the hardships, situations and prejudices he had to have encountered throughout his life without harboring bitterness or resentment.*

*The first time I encountered Lindy Hop, I was immediately drawn to it. I was already into Swing dancing and dabbling in other kinds of social dancing, but there was something about Lindy Hop that just surpassed all of that. My passion was pretty much instant and I just wanted more! The more I danced Lindy Hop, the more both Tony and I wanted everyone to do it, and that is what got us started with teaching and why we still teach today.*

*I am very thankful that so many people had the opportunity to meet Frankie at Beantown over the years. For myself, I have many wonderful memories and moments to cherish from*

*Beantown and beyond, including teaching classes with him, dancing, Shim Shamming and talking with him. I can still hear that big laugh of his and feel the joy that always surrounded him. One of my favorite memories is of Tony and I (and a bunch of others) performing the Lindy Chorus one year. We were dancing right next to Frankie and all I could think of through the entire song was that we were performing with Frankie Manning! How cool is that!*

*A lot has happened over the years and a lot has gotten much more complicated, just as with life in general. However, when I have those feelings of being overwhelmed, I try to think about the positives. I think about the people who come to class or come to a dance. As Frankie said, it doesn't matter who they are, how old they are, or how good they are, the important thing is that they are dancing! If we can help create a little bit of happiness and little bit of joy, if we can make those people feel welcome to join in and make dancing a part of their lives, then I feel it is all worthwhile. To all of us, Frankie was the King of Swing, yet he never acted as if he was any more special than anyone else. However, Frankie was incredibly special. He was warm and considerate, kind*



and welcoming. I hope Frankie is looking down with that wonderful big smile of his, looking at our happy faces and proud that we're all still swinging out!

**Aurelie Tye**

## DANIEL NEWSOME, NYC

(LIVED IN DENVER)

*I remember when I first met Frankie. I hadn't been dancing long and I heard about a workshop happening at Karen Lee Dance in Denver. A number of us signed up, and we got to take classes from him. We didn't know him except for a few glimpses on some old Herräng videos, but as many of us have experienced, his spirit, energy, joy, and smile immediately captured all of our hearts. He was still pretty energetic at this point, and even besides all the teaching, he did a birthday dance that evening where he danced with as many follows as he was years old, which I think was 84 at the time. We ran out of follows and he started grabbing leads to swing out. I could barely lead a swing out, let alone follow one, and he grabbed me... still to this day I can distinctly remember what it felt like.*

*Another time Norma came with him and we got a chance to perform for them both. Our routine had many aerials and Norma was ecstatic to see airsteps, as she was just starting to reconnect with the Lindy community. They stood up for us at the end, and it was such a proud moment for all of us. We weren't all that great, but he knew the work we put in, and he made us feel fantastic about it in a genuine way. Almost every single member of the group still dances today and I think in large part that's due to being inspired by Frankie (and Norma).*

*After the show we asked for feedback from Frankie and he gave us well-thought-out, accurate and constructive feedback. In just a few simple words he gave us ideas I still carry with me today in every dance. The following years that he came would inspire people who hadn't danced in years, and it reinvigorated our community every time. His stories helped us form a picture of what life was like back then, and how the dance fit into history. We never got tired of hearing them, and so often we discussed the things he told us and researched into them further. They became as interwoven into our personal stories as our family histories, because we BECAME a big family through dancing, and Frankie was like a father, guiding us in the right direction the whole time.*

**Daniel Newsome**



*Frankie Manning Weekend, Denver, 2001*

*(from left) Tiffany Wine, Brianna Gillespie, Dianah Walker, Judd Mercer, Frankie Manning, Ceth Stifel, Daniel Newsome, Norma Miller, Tyler Burd, Jen Goldsmith. Photographer unknown. (Photo courtesy of Dan Newsome)*

## WHO'S THE NEXT AMBASSADOR OF LINDY HOP?

This is just a small part of Frankie's stories; many of you all have your own stories of Frankie. And, there are many dancers who've never met him before. So, your stories can be a connection between him and the next generation of dancers. Will you be the next Ambassador of Lindy Hop? We all are very important. We are living Lindy Hop. Never Stop Swingin'!



*Frankie and Grandson Drew Manning on 90th birthday p. 36 cruise. Photo courtesy of Jenny De La Cruz*



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# FRANKIE MANNING & THE

**Karl Lennart Westerlund**

(with thanks to **Odella Schattin** for correcting my English)

When Frankie came to the Herräng Dance Camp for the very first time in the summer of 1989, it was the beginning of a most successful and long-lasting relationship. The event itself had been in operation on a small scale since 1982, focused mainly on dancing Jitterbug to rock 'n' roll music. Frankie was invited to the camp with the intention of reintroducing swing music and the Lindy Hop to the Swedish Jitterbug scene. At the time, very few of the students who came to Herräng knew who Frankie was and general know-how about the Lindy Hop was close to nonexistent. Still, anticipation of Frankie's visit stirred up excitement. Many dancers had been exposed to the Lindy Hop by the small pockets of Stockholm-based dancers who had managed to keep the dance form alive since Albert Minns' visit five years earlier.

When Frankie arrived in Herräng, he had recently turned 75 and had been teaching on a regular basis in New York for a couple of years. The revival was clearly underway and Frankie had already made his choice: he was ready to put on his dance shoes once again. Frankie became the natural link between the past and the present, bridging the gap between the Harlem ballrooms of the swing era and contemporary dance floors throughout the world.

Frankie became an immediate success in Herräng and throughout Sweden. Besides being a dancer's dancer, he was charming, down-to-earth and approachable. He was charismatic, had an irresistible laugh, and carried himself like a gentleman (in the best, old-fashioned sense of the word). Throughout the early years, Frankie based his teaching on different medium tempo routines, sometimes including lifts and not-too-complicated air-steps. Frankie spoke the language of swing effortlessly while his students were struggling with its A-B-Cs. Rhythmical scatting often had to be translated into accessible figures, and unaccustomed feet had to be shown the steps over and over again. Luckily, Frankie was patient and he seemed to be very comfortable in his new role as the moderator and translator of jazz rhythms to a young and as yet non-swinging generation. Harlem dance life of the 1930s had suddenly found an expressive and contemporary voice in Frankie, and an international and somehow unlikely platform in the countryside village of Herräng in Sweden.

Frankie was joined by his son Chazz in Herräng in 1990, and they immediately formed a unique presence. Their friendship was very special, more like one of two brothers than father and son, and since the camp always spanned several weeks, they had lots of time to hang out together. They typically flew in from New York, spent a few days in Stockholm, traveled to Herräng on the very first day of the event, stayed for the entire camp, traveled back to Stockholm for a few days of rest and relaxation and finally flew back to their respective homes, Frankie to New York and Chazz to Las Vegas. In total, they spent somewhere between three to six weeks in Sweden every year for exactly 19 years! Their collaborations on stage in Herräng became legendary. Frankie was a natural storyteller; Chazz was the perfect straight man with few words but lots of presence. Very often they finished their presentations with their rendition of the Shim Sham to Jimmie Lunceford's *Tain't What You Do*'. Their performances were a mix of history lesson, talk show and comedy. They had, after all, lots of experience in how to put on a show and how to capture the attention of an audience.





# HERRÄNG DANCE CAMP

Frankie loved parties. Over the years, the camp has had a tradition of putting on elaborate parties and Frankie often ended up in the middle of the action. He was especially fond of theme parties and masquerades. No one who was there at the time will ever forget some of these festivities: Invasion from Mars, Cannibal Night, Stock Market Crash, A Night in Tunisia, Studio 54 and, especially, Cross Dressing Night, with Frankie and Chazz dressed as eye-catching elderly damsels! Another of Frankie's favorite parties was the teachers' yearly crayfish party where Frankie often became the natural conductor and master of Swedish drinking songs. Frankie was without a doubt a playful showman who easily and effortlessly could handle the limelight. At the same time, he was far from being an attention seeker, knowing instinctively when to step into the action and when to step out.

The Lindy Hop scene has grown enormously since the revival started in the 1980s. When the Herräng Dance Camp adopted the dance form in the summer of 1989, it was one of the very first events focusing on the Lindy Hop. Nowadays, the swing dance map is covered with international events every weekend of the year.

Over the years, Frankie's know-how and personality became the heart and soul of the camp. He had an extraordinary ability to make you feel included, whether you were a beginner or a hot shot. He was well-known for his spirit and humor, both of which were contagious. When Frankie left the camp in 2007, we had no idea that he would not be returning. He seemed somehow immortal and still full of vitality. Today, five years after his passing, his spirit is still very present in Herräng: in film clips and photos, in words, in lectures, in discussions – he is anything but merely a name in a history book. A street in the village was renamed in his honor, his footprints hang on a wall in Folkets Hus, and every summer the camp features an exhibition based on his legacy. He was a man of extraordinary human qualities which we all have a responsibility to remember and emulate, especially when spending time in Herräng.



*Frankie Manning and son, Chazz Young, 1991. Photography courtesy of Ewa W Burak*

# TRAVELING WITH FRANKIE & CHAZZ IN AFRICA

*Mickey Davidson,  
with Chazz Young*

*In 2003, Lindy Hoppers from around the world pitched in, in all sorts of ways, to help Frankie go to Africa. Here is the story of that trip, told by one of his long-time dance partners, Mickey Davidson, and his son, Chazz.*

**Mickey:** I left on May 12th and returned May 28th, 2003. Frankie and Chazz arrived on the 15th and left on the 23rd. The sponsors of the trip were members of the World Lindy Hop Community, with Laurie Ann Lepoff and Sylvia Sykes administrating the details.





*Chazz and Frankie being welcomed by a local dance group directed by former dancer, Addi Lang. They performed two African-Jazz type dances to welcome Frankie to Johannesburg, South Africa after the opening dinner, May 2003. Photo Courtesy of Mickey Davidson*





**Chazz:** You're right, the woman's name was Laurie Ann. I remember that we were in California and Frankie was asked is there any place in the world you haven't been and you would like to go? So Frankie says, "Africa, South Africa." He said that he would like to go and teach the Shim Sham, meet the people, and see the sights. After that interview, Laurie Ann took action, started asking around to different organizations, societies, and others to donate frequent flyer miles to give Frankie a trip to Africa. They collected enough miles to send Frankie, me, and ultimately Mickey too. But that's how it began.

**Mickey:** At first my involvement was just meant to be giving names and addresses of people I knew in Africa. However as things developed, I got more involved, trying to make sure that the project happened. In addition, my goal, as the trip came into focus, was to show Frankie the many layers of South Africa that I had discovered on a previous trip. Because of time and budget, we kept most of the activities centered around the Johannesburg area. Frankie made it clear that he did not want to teach, so Chazz and I had the responsibility of leading any programmed dance activities.

**Chazz:** I want to say something here about what happened before we got to South Africa. As we traveled to Africa, we made a stop in New Zealand. While we were waiting to board the plane to go to South Africa, we saw an entourage of people walking towards us. As they got closer, we recognized one of the people – it was President Clinton! Frankie and I looked at each other, saying, "Wonder where he's going?" When we got on the plane, we sat down and Frankie pulled his cap down to go to sleep. We hadn't taken off yet, and down the aisle comes President Clinton shaking people's hands. I said, "Frankie! Wake up! President Clinton is coming this way." Frankie turned and looked at me and then pulled his cap back over his head and went back to sleep. When President Clinton got to where we were sitting, I stood up and reached over, shook his hand, and said, "It is a pleasure and an honor to meet you, President Clinton." He went on to the next person and I said, "Frankie! I shook the President's hand!" And Frankie says to me, "Why didn't you wake me up?" I told him, "I tried!" That is one memorable event that happened on our way to South Africa. That was the one and only President's hand I ever shook!

**Mickey:** When we got to South Africa, Frankie and Chazz were guests of honor at a dinner party with local organizers, the press and helpful associates hosting Frankie's trip. Among the people who attended the dinner was Addi Lang, a former dancer in Sun City (a casino and resort in South Africa) who is presently developing a dance group of local African girls. Addi was very instrumental in bringing people together and getting us around. Her group of young dancers performed two African-Jazz type routines for Frankie as a way of welcoming him to the country.

Some of the other people at this first dinner were Louis Mahlangu (Louie), a community worker from Soweto who was our tour guide, and who also made connections for us with an elementary school and an adult theatre group, and who arranged for lunch at a Sabeen, a house restaurant (see below) for a real South African meal. Also in attendance was Phindile Xaba, an editor for a local newspaper called **Sowetan** who did a wonderful interview with the three of us during the last hours of the trip. Martina Jager organized the tour from Johannesburg to Malamala and the surrounding countryside along the way. Robin (can't remember his last name) and his wife, Heather, represented a newly formed swing club, and further extended themselves by making additional connections with the producer of a show called *African Footprints* as well as helping with transportation and general support. Thoba Karl-Halla, an organizer and township tour guide, came with Phindile; she accompanied us to the local school as a parent, to observe. For me, it was wonderful seeing and hosting this very diverse group of people who came together for the chance to meet and host Frankie and the dance he represents. They also liked the tapping feet of Chazz, along with the honor that, in African tradition, a son brings traveling and working with his father. There were a few local young adults not involved with dance, helping with cooking, serving, and hosting. The young dancers who performed, as well as their parents, also shared in this dinner of welcome for Frankie and Chazz.

The next day Frankie and Chazz took a two-and-a-half-day trip to the private game park called Malamala. I had been in Malamala in February, and I knew Frankie would see many animals up close.

**Chazz:** Going to Malamala, our first reservation or game preserve, was a thrill because our imaginations more or less ran away with us! It was very exciting riding around in this open truck with no kind of top or shelter, riding along in the brush and trees, thinking a snake could fall out of a tree or a lion could come rushing out at any minute! That's what I meant about our imaginations; we were laughing and taking chances. For example, the driver and I took a chance and got out and started to walk ahead of the vehicle, and the spotter took over the wheel. He has this long rifle and we're walking in front of the vehicle and I start thinking, there is no way in the world he could get to that rifle if a tiger starts running towards us, so we turned around and got back in the truck. That was very, very funny! It was our first safari and it was really thrilling and exciting!

I remember when we got to our first night's stopping place we went to the hut. The guy was getting ready to leave and he told us, "Under no circumstances should you come out after shutting the door, and make sure you lock it." He repeated this several times: "Do not come out of this hut after you have shut and locked the door." And you know

damn well we stayed in that hut! We weren't coming out looking for nothing! We heard animal sounds and things throughout the night. Oh wow! It was very, very thrilling! It was a very wonderful, rewarding safari at Malamala.



Marina Jager, Peter, Frankie Manning and Chazz Young. May 2003, South Africa



Mathilda Giwu, Principal of St. Peter Clavier School, with teachers Chazz and Frankie



Frankie Manning, owner of a Sabeen restaurant, Louis Mahlangu, Chazz Young, May 2003, South Africa. All photos courtesy of Mickey Davidson

**Mickey:** There were two rides a day: one drive in the morning and another one late afternoon/early evening. The tracker served refreshments at a scenic location at sunset, and Frankie got his certificate for spotting the big five: elephants, lions, giraffes, buffalo, and rhinoceroses. On the way back, Frankie and Chazz spent the night in a small town called Dullstrom, and stopped in Durban where they visited the beach and a large performing arts center. These places were very different from Johannesburg.

**Chazz:** Besides the excitement of the safari at Malamala, I also remember the scenery. It was fabulous! And, as we were riding back through Soweto, the driver pointed to where Nelson Mandela used to live that is now a museum, and that was powerful for both of us to see. We drove around parts of the city that were very crowded with vendors selling their wares. It was very interesting watching them making carvings and preparing to sell their artwork. Here in the United States we get the finished product shipped over, but to see them working on it was very interesting.

**Mickey:** While Frankie and Chazz were at the game preserve, Louie took me to the St. Peter Clavier School, a Catholic elementary school in the township of Soweto. The principal Mathilda Giwu welcomed the opportunity for both the students and the teachers of having guests come to her school. On the first day, I went alone, escorted by Mr. Mahlangu. I met with the teachers and then two classes, one 4th and one 5th grade, to prepare the students for Frankie's visit. We talked about what happened to the captured Africans on American shores and the life that the people developed as African-Americans. We did the plantation dance and song *Juba*, a few Charleston moves, and a simple version of the Shim Sham Shimmy. By the time we finished, a couple of the parents had come and joined in. A 45-minute session turned into an energetic hour-and-a-half session of dance and song!

Two days later, Frankie & Chazz came, and the children were prepared. All of the 4th and 5th graders were brought into the multi-purpose room, and the magic began to happen. The parents brought their VCR and CD players from their homes. We showed the 17-minute **National Geographic** special *Jitterbug*, a video featuring interviews with Frankie, Norma, the early Cats Club, the Jiving Lindy Hoppers, Clyde Wilder and me. The students were very excited to see Frankie in his heyday. The students asked questions about Frankie and his life in the dance. Chazz did a tap demonstration and of course we did a live swing out with both Frankie and Chazz. The children showed Frankie their Shim Sham Shimmy and then the parents led the children in their traditional songs as the children did a costume parade of traditional clothes representing the township. Frankie was treated as an honored Grandfather for the day. It was a wonderful, multigenerational sharing.

**Chazz:** Yes, it was wonderful! We enjoyed seeing the children in their traditional clothing, and loved their singing! They sang with their hearts. It was overwhelming. You could hear and see in their faces that they really wanted to please us; they wanted us to feel what they felt, and we did. I remember that Frankie, you, and I got up and went among the children and just started clapping and swaying with them.

**Mickey:** While we were dancing, Frankie said to me that it was too bad this moment wasn't being filmed because it was such a beautiful moment; then he paused and observed that it wouldn't have been the same if it had been...

After leaving the school, a semiprivate performance by a young-adult theatre company called Positive Art Society was our second stop in Soweto. After the performance, the young people asked questions. The performers learned and sang *Juba*. This is a song and dance with a basic Charleston step that was done before the end of slavery. This became a favorite of Louie's so I had to demonstrate it and teach it everywhere he took me. Chazz and I did some swing outs, and Chazz demonstrated tap by popular request. It's nice to feel that we left a legacy of hope, perseverance, and excellence, with these young people.

We had lunch at a Sabean before leaving the township. A Sabean is a "house restaurant", or a restaurant in a private home. During apartheid, Africans were not allowed to own businesses. Therefore, people in the townships created businesses and operated out of their private homes. So we were eating the local food of the township. There's a restaurant called Sylvia's in Harlem, which has a similar feel.

**Chazz:** I was wondering what we would eat, and it turned out to be chicken! We had a nice chicken dinner and met some nice people. Then we went to a studio in Johannesburg run by some white people; we went there and did some swing outs. It was like their swing club.

**Mickey:** Yes, it was a newly formed swing club that was beginning to meet on a regular basis. I taught the first class there. The next week, Frankie and Chazz came for the second class. As we walked in, I remember someone saying, "What are you people doing here?" There was an edge to the comment, but it was not hostile... I think we were in a situation that usually was not integrated, and we were the only people of color. Then I showed the National Geographic video, and watched the participants' expressions change as they watched. For me, it showed the power dance can have on the human spirit. After the video, I gave another class with Chazz. Frankie participated by dancing, correcting, filling in as an extra leader, and giving a lot of encouragement to all the participants. A good time was had by all. The swing club presented Frankie with a bottle of red wine that we drank during our final meal before Frankie and Chazz left the country.

We had a visit with Dali Thambo, the son of Oliver Thambo (a leader of the African National Congress (ANC) who had been exiled in England for many years). His son has now returned to the country and has a TV show called *People of the South*. This show highlights different people in this new era of South Africa's growth. Addi made the arrangements for a visit and not a formal interview for Dali Thambo's TV show. She pointed out how important Frankie is to the culture of dance in America. They agreed to have the visit take place at his house.

**Chazz:** Yes, I remember going to Dali Tambo's house; he had a fabulous house and he gave Frankie some gifts. I don't remember if he gave me anything, but he gave Frankie some impressive sheets and pillowcases with fancy embroidery on them. It was a little bit of a let down for him because he thought Frankie was associated with Quincy Jones. He had been expecting some friends of Quincy Jones to come visit him and he thought that's who we were.

**Mickey:** As we left his house, we passed two figures of black jockeys holding lamps. Dali Thambo mentioned he found them in Paris and just had to have them. Frankie said in America these jockeys would be seen as offensive and we kept walking.

**Chazz:** Yeah, they didn't look at it that way, as being offensive but we did and Frankie mentioned it, which wasn't like him. But it was true -- those jockeys are symbols of the jockeys who were slaves in America.

Our next stop was the Casino where we saw a real theatre piece, a popular show called *African Footprints*.

**Mickey:** Chazz and I taught a class for the cast of this show. At that time, the show was housed in a theatre that was part of a casino complex. The show is traveling the world, and had just returned from China. It explores the African influence on dance and music throughout the Diaspora. During the class, the cast watched the National Geographic video and asked all kinds of questions. They had many questions about Frankie's life and how he lived. In their show, they do a section called Jive but knew little to nothing about the roots of swing or what they called "Jive." The dancers were so taken by the video that they had tons of questions for Frankie. The producer, Richard Loring, had to stop the questions so there'd be time for dancing.

Once again, Frankie started by watching what Chazz and I were teaching. Then, Frankie popped up onto the stage and gave a combination, danced it a couple of times, then sat back down while Chazz and I taught the details. The members of the cast were knocked off their feet, and at the end of the session, asked the producer, Richard Loring, if they could put the combination in the show. However, with



the choreographer not there, there could be no changes in the choreography in the show.

Then after the class, the producer treated us to dinner, sat and talked with us. Before *African Footprints* started, Frankie was introduced as an honored guest.



*Cast of African Footprints, May 2003, South Africa*



*Johannesburg Swing Club, South Africa, May 2003*



*Students at St. Peter Clavier school, where Frankie and Chazz visited and taught the Shim Sham. May 2003, South Africa  
All photos courtesy of Mickey Davidson*

A good-bye lunch and interview with reporter Phindile Xaba from the **Sowetan** had been arranged at my son's home (which is also where we held the opening dinner). On the day Frankie and Chazz were leaving, my son came back from his honeymoon. Since we still had left overs, we had a family meal with *Juba*, meaning a little of this and a little of that! (Juba is more than a dance!)

A word about Ms. Xaba, who wanted to get a chance to formally interview Frankie. She knew little about Frankie before our first dinner, but I noticed she observed that dinner very closely, watching the people who were there and how we all were interacting. She kept up with our other activities during the week and called to ask where or how to get more information on Frankie. I sent her to the Internet and on this last day she came in knowing Frankie's personal and career history. The strongest impression Ms. Xaba expressed, based on interviews she had done with other stars from America (because after her study, she considered Frankie a star), was Frankie's humility, graciousness, and friendliness.

Shortly after the interview, the car came to take Frankie and Chazz to the airport. (By the way, I would be remiss if I did not add that even though my son was out of town, he made his home, his friends, and a car accessible for our use as needed during this whole trip.)

**Chazz:** Frankie was thrilled, overwhelmed with the overall experience. It was a great point in his life, like a dream come true, just being there in Africa for the first time. Both of us just had a wonderful time. I mean we traveled and went to different places in the world on a regular basis, but this had so much more meaning to Frankie and me both because our ancestors came from Africa; that is what made it so very special. That was one of the reasons Frankie wanted to go in the first place.

**Mickey:** Weeks after we left, I heard about and auditioned for a TV commercial being shot in South Africa for a tomato sauce. (I believe Frankie went down for the audition also.) The commercial was to be shown in South Africa and Europe during August and September. The story concept was as follows: there is an elderly couple at a family dinner. They move slowly onto the dance floor. The entire family lightens up when they start doing the Lindy Hop including air steps. After they finish, they become that slow-moving, sweet elderly couple again. David and Deborah from the Mama Lu Parks Dancers flew over and shot the commercial.

I do think that Frankie's visit had an influence on that commercial concept, and that it is symbolic of the impact that Swing Dance, and its Chief Ambassador, Frankie Manning, have had on the world.



*Mark Ormsby presenting Frankie with birthday card (containing photos and best wishes from Washington D.C. area dancers) following Frankie's performance at a Library of Congress event recognizing traditional dance on May 18, 1995. Marc Shepanek looks on." Photo by Brian McGill*





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# FRANKIE & KIDS



*Frankie Manning and Ramona Staffeld, Midsummer Night Swing, at Lincoln Center, 1998. Photo by Bill Staffeld.*

## **Ramona Staffeld**

Let's start from the beginning. When Frankie Manning danced he was ageless, and his authenticity and ability to express joy made it so.

These qualities are often used to describe children, and what it is that makes them special in the world. Frankie was extra special. I was only 13 when I met him, and I instantly recognised what we had in common, and that he put me at ease. Furthermore, I had complete faith that everyone else in my life would understand, even if they weren't a dancer. We used to invite our friends and family to his talks, to hear his stories and feel the vibration of his laugh. Frankie was an expert storyteller, and who doesn't like a good story? His

story telling was another kind of invitation to participate, and an important aspect of his role as ambassador of the Lindy Hop to the rest of the world.

Frankie came to Ithaca to teach a workshop in the fall of 1997. The swing revival was moving right along by then, with Lindy Hop scenes all over the world. We anticipated his arrival and just could not wait to take his classes, hear his stories, and dance with him (if we were that lucky). When it came to Frankie, all levels were welcome and that kind of inclusiveness is what builds community. It didn't matter how old, or how young you were, or what level you were at, the question was whether you were willing to give something

a try and have fun. It appealed to us. Children tend to be open to new experiences without judging or censoring themselves, so it's no wonder that our group, the Ithaca Swing Kids, took to him so completely (in truth, he had that kind of effect on everybody). Lindy Hop is playful yet solid, danced to music you just can't help but smile to. We loved it. We loved the joy. We loved him. Our goal was to soak up as much as we could from this great master. Looking back the most important thing he taught us, was to love the music. To know that the dance and music were one, born from the same place, in need of each other.

Not long after this, we used our motivation to start our own group, Minnie's Moochers. The group was smaller and had a focus on practice and then application, whether it was on the social dance floor, or performance and competition. We just loved the Lindy Hop and couldn't get enough. It was the right time, the right place, the right people, and before we knew it, we were winning national competitions and being invited to teach workshops to other keen dancers. It was a special time, and I personally thank Frankie for infecting me with a lifelong love of all things swingin', and a completely new relationship with music. Although, I now understand that as a group, we came from a community that values emotion, sensitivity, intuition, and play. It is thanks to our parents, families, and friends that we were so open and ready to receive. Nonetheless, it was through the Lindy Hop that I found my expressive home. I had always loved swing and jazz in general, but when Frankie danced to the music, it became three-dimensional. He was the picture of the sound. It was as if he helped me over the threshold of a door to the place where my natural instincts were useful, and powerful. I had total permission to express myself through the structure and guidelines of the dance, while simultaneously sharing it with my partner. I have never gone back.

As young adults, still children finding our way, partner dancing was a fantastic outlet for energy and the need for physical contact in an appropriate manner. Frankie taught respect, listening, teamwork, and ultimately how to get to know our own personalities and uniqueness. We were encouraged to express ourselves and talk to our partners through body language, cultivating our personal voice through an improvisational form. Movement in general is a counter to sitting still at a desk for long periods of time, and dance is the perfect opposite to that state of being. Learning from Frankie was as good as it could get. His teaching philosophy of making learning fun through jokes, scattin', and generally having a good time himself was the right approach for any kid, or any kid at heart.

Sometimes in life, we don't know how special something or someone is until later, yet we Ithaca kids knew that learning from and being around Frankie was a big deal. I

can remember thinking that he was like the Dalai Lama. I understood that he was teaching me something bigger, even at that time. I knew that learning from the horse's mouth was extremely fortunate and rare, but I also knew that he was human, and therefore I could be like him. My love of social dancing came from him, from his genuine interest in people and seeing their smiles out on the dance floor. I am a trained dancer in the classical sense, but Frankie taught me to say yes to new experiences, to say yes when someone asks me to dance, no matter who they are. Yes, I was a social person to begin with, but Frankie showed me the way to truly fall in love with my partner, the music, and myself. I learned to share on a whole new level. Love is powerful, and the desire to find even three minutes of harmony with another person is enough to teach us about what really matters in this life.



*The Ithaca Swing Kids with Frankie, at The City Health Club in Ithaca, New York, 1997. photo Andrea Staffeld.*

Today, 17 years later, Frankie's influence on young people continues. Valerie Salstrom has founded an after-school program for students of inner city schools in Cleveland, Ohio. I had the honour and pleasure of working with her Jitterbug Kids and was blown away by their talent and ability to watch something and just pick it up, including rhythm, shape, and weight changes. They are proud when they succeed, and you can tell that that kind of belief in themselves is nourishing and restorative. Valerie has even been bringing some of her students to the International Lindy Hop Championships to compete and participate in the community and celebrations.

In Baltimore, a similar program has sprung up, bringing swing dance and music to kids who really need it (we all need it). In both programs, the students learn the dance, the history, and the music. They are exposed to the culture then, and the culture now. Partner dancing is an incredible teacher about relationships in general and a pathway towards knowing oneself. I could not think of a better way to prepare kids for the 'real' world, and the expectation and demands of the society we live in.



*Frankie Manning with kids at Lindyfest, March 15, 2009. Photo by David Holmes Photography*

This is a piece written by Rodney Lopez, from *Dancing Classrooms*. His words echo my own and show us another example of how Frankie's legacy lives on.

Currently in its 20th year, *Dancing Classrooms* is a social development program that cultivates essential life skills in children through the practice of ballroom dance. While learning ballroom dances such as Merengue, Foxtrot, Tango and Swing and Waltz, children are also learning respect, teamwork, confidence and self-esteem. Our program was featured in the documentary *Mad Hot Ballroom*, the feature film *Take The Lead* starring Antonio Banderas, and is currently the focus of a new documentary, *Dancing in Jaffa*.

*Dancing Classrooms* was founded in 1994 by Pierre Dulaine, initially as a project of the American Ballroom Theater (ABrT). With the goal of bringing ballroom dance to the performance stage, ABrT showcased the talents of top dancers and choreographers from the world of ballroom and social dance. Once such choreographer was the great Frankie Manning. Pierre Dulaine and Yvonne Marceau collaborated with Frankie on a Swing routine for ABrT's performances at the legendary Joyce Theater in New York City. They were delighted to have Frankie join them on stage at the end of one of their performances for a *Shim Sham*.

Frankie's legacy lives on in every *Dancing Classrooms* residency conducted around the world. During the 10th lesson of our 20-lesson in-school residency, children watch and reflect on video clips of professional ballroom dancers of various styles. The highlight of these lessons is always the *Jitterbug* clip, which features

Frankie and other Lindy legends tearing up the dance floor. Students enjoy seeing Frankie's infectious smile and energetic moves, even though he was in his 70s at the time. The video also features a brief interview with Manning, where he talks about why he loved dancing Lindy Hop. This video is seen by over 42,000 children a year in over 30 cities in the United States and internationally, ensuring that Frankie's contribution will be remembered by a new generation of young people.

Before I finish, I want to add that this piece is mostly from my experience. There are many stories and events involving Frankie and children/young adults that have shaped the lives of those involved all over the world. There have been programs in Harlem, Estonia, Ukraine, Sweden, Seattle, Massachusetts you name it, and countless stories that are similar to my own.

Where will the another swing kids program pop up? If you have any interest in teaching children or young adults, do it! Don't hold back. Gather your friends and other like motivated people, and make it happen. Very often, people come up to me after class and say, "I wish I started younger, when I was a kid." I am speaking from experience, it might just change your life and theirs. I would not be where I am geographically, if it were not for Frankie. I would not have some of the best friends anyone could dream of, if it were not for Frankie. I would not be with the man I love, if it were not for Frankie, and I would certainly not be doing what it is that I love so dearly, without Frankie. A thousand thank yous would never be enough.



# FRANKIE & MORE KIDS

*Mariel Adams*

In May 2006, at age 15 I had been dancing for about 2 years and I wanted to share my love of Lindy Hop with other people my age, so I started a swing dance club called the Hurricane Swingers (named after my high school mascot).

I had met Frankie through the New York and Massachusetts dance communities, and had attended regional and national workshops and events where Frankie taught or was a guest speaker. I remember getting to spend time with Frankie and learn about his life during the Count Basie Centennial in October 2004 in New York City, where hundreds of swing veterans came to celebrate and reunite in the name of swing music and the Lindy Hop.

Anyway, in May '06 our local western Massachusetts swing dance community (headed by Adam LaMontagne) had Frankie come out from New York to teach a one-day workshop. My mother Alison Ozer helped me to coordinate a school-wide assembly after that event where Frankie came to teach and present about his life as an Ambassador of Swing. It was amazing to see 300-400 students who would otherwise be rowdy and uninterested in a boring assembly instead engaged and laughing along with his stories. They enjoyed watching his dancing in historical videos such as *Hellzapoppin'* and they listened to the jazz music of the '30s and '40s played by my very own high school jazz band.

I taught my students in the Hurricane Swingers (all girls) the Lindy chorus to perform in front of Frankie (which was terrifying) but he was all too happy to cheer and support us. Then the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts School (coordinated



*Frankie Manning with Amherst Regional High and PVPA dancers (including Mari Adams) at Assembly, 2006  
Both photos by Allison Mozer*

by Trisha Lee) and I performed as a group in the Big Apple. The students and teachers cheered. Frankie then taught a workshop after the school day and I was so grateful to him that he would share and spend his time teaching other students like me the basics of Lindy Hop, including the Swing Out, Lindy Circle, and some turns. Especially because it was his birthday that weekend!

We celebrated with the Pioneer Valley (western Massachusetts) dance community and he shared his love of sweet potato pie with me. As a young dancer and student, Frankie's warmth and humble personality allowed even the most shy and inexperienced dancers to want to jump up and swing out. He really touched my heart when it came to sharing the love of the dance and the values he held; the spirit of Lindy Hop was passed on.



Frankie at 90 with sweet potato pie. Photo by Beth Tondreau

# ALWAYS A SHOWMAN

## (FOOD-RELATED) MEMORIES OF FRANKIE MANNING

*Jeff Leyco*

Somehow, despite passing it almost every day for a year, I never got to try the catfish sammich at ACME Bar & Grill. It used to be a place that Frankie Manning and many other dancers frequented, and I had no idea. People even used to dance there.

For about a year I lived in a neighborhood called NoHo – North of Houston Street, pronounced “house-ton.” At the time, it still held on to some of its “Old New York” grit – the famous dive Mars Bar was still open for business, the Bowery Poetry Club was right down the block, and CBGB’s, the home of punk rock, had only recently closed down. But the neighborhood was changing more and more each day, and luxury condos began dotting each block.

It’s the way Manhattan works. Decrepit neighborhoods become artistic. Artistic neighborhoods become trendy. Trendy neighborhoods become desirable, and then everyone wants to move in. Everything changes – the Manhattan you remember from a year ago is not the same anymore.

Mimi Liu and I had the idea of tracking down Frankie’s favorite places to eat and hang out for Frankie 100. Given how quickly places open for business and then close forever, we were surprised to be able to put together a list with as many places as we did. Many of those places, like Bayard’s Ale House and Make My Cake, are now in the place where something else once stood.

In order to compile the list, we decided to talk to Cynthia Millman, co-author (along with Frankie) of **Frankie Manning: Ambassador of Lindy Hop**, and Judy Pritchett, his longtime companion. At first, our idea had simply been to figure out which of these places were still around, read some reviews, give directions, and make recommendations.

An e-mail exchange with Judy inspired a further look into things.

Instead of providing a simple list of places to go, I began writing this piece to try to recapture what it was like to hang

out with Frankie Manning, not on the dance floor but rather after the music ended, after everyone had gone home.

What was it like to be so close to Frankie? What was it like to spend a night out with him?

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Mimi and I met Cynthia at her apartment on one of the rainiest days in recent memory. Cynthia made tea, and Mimi picked at a bowl of jelly beans while we talked about all the old places that Frankie used to go. Sadly, many of the places she mentioned are gone. The North River Cafe in SoHo closed. Soul food restaurant Shark Bar on Amsterdam Avenue closed. Sazerac House, where Cynthia and Frankie would often go while writing their book, closed and was replaced by Bayard's Ale House.

Even ACME is different now. It's still there, sort of. It shares the same name, but it doesn't serve southern food anymore. According to its website, the new restaurant opened in 2012 "in the space formerly occupied by the long-time Cajun mainstay ACME." The only things that remain the same are the name and its fire-red and blue facade: the new managers completely revamped the inside, but wanted to have "a nod to the history of the neighborhood."

Perhaps that's better than nothing, but it's nowhere close to being the same place anymore. The menu still looks good, if you're into "locally sourced, seasonal New American fare with subtle Nordic influences."

But Frankie Manning liked soul food.

After our meeting with Cynthia, Mimi and I corresponded with Judy. She provided a list of various places that Frankie also loved, though many of those have also closed.

But then she also suggested looking a bit deeper into why Frankie went to these places – who he was, when he wasn't on the dance floor.

To flesh it out, I got into contact with three people who knew Frankie very well: bandleader and New York favorite George Gee; Margaret Batiuchok, who founded the New York Swing Dance Society (NYSDS) and played a key role in the revival of Lindy Hop; and Judy Pritchett herself.

Through my conversations with them, I learned that Frankie was a classic gentleman, as kind-hearted and warm a human being as could be.

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*George Gee* leads a big band most Tuesday nights at Swing 46, along Restaurant Row just off of Times Square. If you pass by outside, you'll hear speakers blasting jazz onto the sidewalk. It never fails to turn heads. What's this music? Where's this coming from?

Inside, following the length of the bar leads to another room with private tables and booths looking over a brightly lit dance floor. From the stage, *George's* band swings with some of the greatest musicians in jazz today while both top-level dancers and beginners take the floor. Frankie came here all the time, often sitting at a reserved table in the corner – a place of high honor, where jazz and dance royalty can often be found.

*George* is among the sharpest-dressed bandleaders out there, with a collection of vintage ties that could make anyone jealous. With a twinkle in his eyes and a smile always on his face, *George* is a staple of New York's music scene. He's led Swing 46's Tuesday night house band since the club opened in 1997.

*George* and Frankie were very close friends. *George* recalls Frankie saying his band was his favorite, though he takes the compliment with a bit of humility. "I suspect he tells that to every band," he said with a laugh.

*George* remembered Frankie as "quiet" and "introspective" when he wasn't in front of a crowd. "He knew how to turn it on," *George* said. "Frankie was always the Ambassador of Lindy Hop, but he was a mellow dude offstage. He still had that smile and twinkle in his eye, but he also really appreciated his downtime."

Frankie, to *George*, was a person he could talk easily with. He loved visiting Frankie at his apartment in Lefrak City in Queens. "We were like teenage girls. We could talk about anything. It was like an episode of *Seinfeld*. We talked about the potholes on Queens Boulevard."

If there was anything that Frankie loved besides music and dancing, it was food. Many people close to Frankie have some kind of food story to tell. *George* remembered a cruise they were on together in 1994.

"You would think he would take good care of himself," he said. "Man, I was behind him on the buffet line and that guy ate the most big ass plate of fried chicken, gravy, and mashed potatoes. Not a single vegetable was nearby. He looked at me and he said, 'I'll meet you at the table.' By the time I got there, his plate was already empty."

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Even though he was well into his eighties, *George* figured Frankie knew how to keep himself in good health. “I guess he worked it off afterward,” *George* laughed. “But I’ve never seen him eat a string bean in his entire life.”

*George* played many events for Frankie, especially his birthday parties. Frankie often recommended *George*’s band to organizers. *George* remembered one particular birthday celebration in Tokyo in 2000, before he and his wife Mastsumi married.

“It was one of the first times I hung out with Matsumi,” *George* said, “and it was the first time Frankie met her.”

*George* introduced the two to one another, and Frankie took him aside with a sly look.

“I know you didn’t travel all the way around the world for me,” Frankie said. “Now I know why you came to Japan.”

Frankie was an enormous presence in *George*’s life with his family. *George* talked about one moment after his son, Glenn, was born. “The first gift we got was from Frankie. It was one of those Swedish baby carriers. It meant a lot to us, that a gentleman of his stature was so thoughtful.”

Some time after that, *George* and his family met Frankie at Catalina Island, off the coast of California. Getting off the ferry, they found Frankie waiting on the dock. Even though they all lived in New York, this was the first time Frankie ever met Glenn. They greeted each other, Glenn still in the Swedish baby carrier Frankie had given them. Frankie patted Glenn on the head and they all took a picture together.

“That moment meant so much to me,” *George* said. “Glenn was a Frankie baby. He was there from the beginning.”

Every year after they became friends, *George*’s family received a Christmas card from Frankie the day after Thanksgiving. He couldn’t imagine how long Frankie worked on those cards. With so many friends around the world, *George* figured Frankie must have been up all night writing addresses.

“I always knew that the day after Thanksgiving, I could always depend on a Christmas card. I told Matsumi, ‘This man must write a lot of Christmas cards. We’re so lucky to be on his list.’” Since Frankie passed, a new generation of dancers have come up that have never interacted with Frankie in a personal way. *George* often talks with these dancers, who are curious about Frankie’s legacy. He says that they would ask him, “You knew Frankie?”

Yehoodi’s Frim Fram Jam on Thursday nights is one of New York’s mainstay dances. Located near Pennsylvania Station, one of the city’s largest transit hubs, Fram is a central dance that’s easy to get to, and among the most fun to be at.

Being such a popular dance night, it’s also a very reliable place to see old friends and meet new people. I met up with *Margaret Batiuchok* here when the dance began, interviewing her in an empty studio across the hall from the music.

*Margaret* played an enormous role in the resurgence of Lindy Hop. She was a founding member of the New York Swing Dance Society, now serving as its president, and won the Harvest Moon Ball at Madison Square Garden with George Lloyd. She also wrote her thesis on Lindy Hop, entitled *The Lindy*, which focused on how unique a dance it could be to every dancer. Interviews of Frankie and clips of him dancing featured prominently in her analysis.

*Margaret* knew Frankie before he became the icon he is today. She remembered him coming to class during a lesson with Norma Miller, before any of them knew who he was. Frankie spectated from the sidelines, she recalled. “He just stood in the corner and watched for a while.”

Later on, she would teach with Frankie regularly in New York. When Frankie began teaching worldwide, he asked *Margaret* if she’d like to come with him as his partner. She declined. “I didn’t want to leave New York,” *Margaret* said. “I didn’t think that was the kind of lifestyle I’d like.”

*Margaret* considered her relationship with Frankie as a friend, as an equal, and as a dance partner. They had their fun – Frankie even nicknamed her, “Margarita How’s-Your-Feeta.” But her relationship with Frankie didn’t feel as if he were above everyone else: “It was a different feeling. When we first knew him, he was always coming around and he’d do some fun things, and he was always a person. He was one of the people.”

Off the dance floor, *Margaret* remembered Frankie as quiet, even reserved. “When he wasn’t on stage,” she said, “he was much more subdued. He liked watching.”

To *Margaret*, Frankie was a very classy gentleman. He’d pick her up and drop her off in his car, taking her to dinner or out dancing. She remembered many nights out with Frankie, dancing and eating at ACME in Manhattan, or heading out to London Lennie’s in Rego Park in Queens. Frankie loved the catfish at London Lennie’s.

“He made you feel like a real woman,” *Margaret* said, laughing. Frankie had very classic manners when he was with people. “He was very confident and very big in his generosity and in his feeling.”

Like George Gee and his family, *Margaret* also received Christmas cards every year from Frankie. In fact, so did her parents. “He has the same birthday as my father,” *Margaret* remembered. “He’s met my parents. He was older than them, and he would tell me, ‘Your mother is beautiful, too!’ He sent them Christmas cards, and every year we’d exchange presents.”

When I asked her about the cards, she smiled. “They were nice. They had personal messages. It took a lot of time. It was those manners, those little things that you can’t really take for granted because you know that they’re special.”

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I met with *Judy Pritchett* after an NYC Ground Staff meeting for Frankie 100. We chatted inside a Starbucks while 1950s and 1960s jazz played on the radio, contending with the sound of espresso machines and steaming milk.

Very few people were anywhere near as close to Frankie as *Judy* was. “We were a couple until he died,” she said with a warm smile. They were together for over 21 years, and referred to each other as boyfriend and girlfriend. They traveled the world together, *Judy* accompanying Frankie on many of his appearances on the other side of the globe.

*Judy* met Frankie through the New York Swing Dance Society, in *Margaret Batiuchok*’s classes. “*Margaret* had this way of getting people out to dance,” *Judy* said, “and Frankie was part of that early crowd. I knew him and danced with him for a couple of years.”

On reflecting on their relationship, many things stood out to *Judy*. When she looked at pictures of him, after they first met, she thought, “Oh, no wonder I was in love with him. He’s gorgeous!” Even though he was 30 years older than she was, it didn’t matter. “The age thing just faded away to nothing. It didn’t mean a thing.”

I asked her how their relationship started and how she developed, in her words, “a mad crush” on Frankie. She told, of course, a food story.

After practice nights on Fridays, *Judy* and several others from NYSDS would go to a Chinese restaurant. Being early in the Lindy revival, *Judy* and the others weren’t very familiar with one another yet. It was difficult to judge etiquette. No one knew each other’s attitudes about sharing food, which made things awkward and sometimes even tense.

After the food came out, Frankie looked at one dish and asked, “What’s the name of that?” When he got the answer, he called the waitress over and ordered another one. He

bypassed an entire awkward situation by getting his own dish that he could share with anyone else.

“And I realized,” *Judy* said, “this was an extraordinary man. He took something that could have been tense, could have been uncomfortable, and found an easy way to make everyone happy!”

The dancers soon grew closer together. She remembered dancing with Frankie and many others at Small’s Paradise, then Northern Lights, following the band from one venue to the next. When the music ended, they’d all go out onto the street but couldn’t say goodbye.

“We just wanted to hang onto the magic,” *Judy* recalled. She remembered a nice, comfortable feeling in the air, something she thought must have been familiar to Frankie when he used to dance at the Savoy. He was a magician – he brought that magic with him, wherever he went. “Just like he wanted everyone to have enough Chinese food,” *Judy* said, “he wanted everyone to have enough Savoy. He wanted to spread it around and make everyone happy.”

But like George and *Margaret*, *Judy* also talked about Frankie being more subdued when he wasn’t on the dance floor. Frankie taught her the difference between being a showman and a showoff. He wanted people to pay attention to him for the right reasons, not just because he wanted attention.

“He was very shy,” *Judy* said. “He was great on the stage telling stories. But he would not dominate a table full of people at dinner.”

*Judy* also knew Frankie as classy and gentlemanly, which often brushed against her own feminist ideals. “He used to always tell people that he had to beat me to the door just to open it for me.”

Frankie’s social graces also meant he rarely talked about people in a negative way. He navigated sticky social situations with charm and charisma. Even in tense situations, if Frankie could find a nice little joke to make, he’d focus on that. “It wasn’t important to him to speak the truth,” *Judy* said. “It was important to him that people felt happy.”

Some event organizers came to realize this about him. Often, *Judy* had to be Frankie’s interpreter. She laughed, recalling planning for Frankie 95. “They’d have a weekly conversation with Frankie, and then they’d have a conversation with me. They’d ask, ‘What was he really thinking?’”

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"Ya sure,  
you betcha!"

"A-one, a-two, a-you  
know what to do!"



**Lindy Love from TC Swing**

Twin Cities, MN ♦ [www.tcswing.com](http://www.tcswing.com)

Wherever Frankie went, *Judy* usually followed. They traveled to Australia, New Zealand, even Budapest. He fell asleep easily on planes and in cars. "Not while he was driving, of course," *Judy* joked.

They shared a beautiful connection with one another, even when they were apart. They used to talk to each other by phone every day, except when Frankie was in Herräng because they could never get the phones to work properly. One night, she said, "Frankie, I miss you."

"That's funny, I don't miss you," Frankie responded. "You're always with me."

Reflecting on that, *Judy* said, "It's the biggest thing I learned from Frankie. It's that way of always being together, even when you're not physically present. And I think that was really good preparation for me to go on and have a wonderful life, even if he's not with us physically. He is with me. I feel very lucky to have had someone like that in my life."

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New York changes every day, but the memories George, Margaret, *Judy*, and so many of us have of Frankie Manning will last forever. He was the man to pay attention to on stage, on the floor, and when he talked to large audiences. But he was also reserved, gentlemanly, and kind. He knew when to take the stage, and when to let others have the spotlight.

He was a showman, never a showoff.

I remember the first time I heard about Cynthia and Frankie's book, **Frankie Manning: Ambassador of Lindy Hop**, back when I had only just started dancing. I turned to Mimi and asked, "Who's Frankie Manning?"

After meeting with some of his closest friends and loved ones, after helping prepare for Frankie 100, after traveling around the world to learn how to dance and seeing his influence everywhere, and after hanging out in many of the places he used to go, I know a little bit more about him now.

Who's Frankie Manning? He's exactly the person you want to hang out with.

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# FLOORCRAFT ESSENTIALS

*Scott Cupit*

I was scolded in the middle of a dance floor once! I had been dancing for about two months and my partner apparently kicked a very senior dancer. He stopped us and gave us a mouthful. It ruined our evening. We had never even heard the word floorcraft and if it wasn't for my absolute love of the music and the dance I may have never gone back. It did highlight that floorcraft and how it's handled is crucial to the growth of a healthy scene.

I have had the fortune to teach dedicated evening floorcraft classes at Herräng and at a variety of dance events since, but I mainly ensure the topic is part of almost every beginner class. When I hear about beginners being blamed for floorcraft issues I wonder if we as the teaching fraternity have failed? I also sit and watch the dance floor and wonder if the problem is actually some of the high-level dancers absolutely bursting to swing out no matter what the consequences. I mainly wonder what happened to common sense!

Yes, in scenes where there is momentum and the dance floors simply become too small for the demand, that will increase the amount of floorcraft problems ... perhaps it's the growing pains of a scene outgrowing its dance spaces. Cool!

We have this issue in London, and have created a campaign to create floorcraft awareness. Large posters are at all of our venues, and flyers are always at every front desk of every class and social we run. It's something a nervous beginner can read about on their first night. We feel that just making people aware of the importance of floorcraft will be hugely beneficial and we already see the results.

We have all witnessed the staggering growth of Lindy Hop scenes over recent years and it's exciting. This means our floorcraft skills must match this growth. Followers and leaders need to be vigilant. Good guidance, teaching and the setting of good examples by the senior people in any scene can really make a difference.

I mainly would highlight these few points:

- *Say sorry and acknowledge.* In Australia we call it a bingle. It's less than a crash but still the coming together of two parties. Don't worry about blame, just acknowledge that it happened, either verbally or at least by making eye contact.
- *Be vigilant.* Be proud that no one gets hit on your shift. Earn the reputation of looking after your dance partner.
- *Remember it's a team effort.* As a team you have four eyes. You are in this together. Followers, give your leaders signals either verbally or with a hand on their shoulder if you see them backing into a collision – remember, they have no rearview mirrors!
- *Be aware of others – this is a SOCIAL dance!* Love every step you take but love it in a way that others love it around you. Like driving a car, enjoy the ride but pay attention to all those around you with whom you are sharing the dance floor! J
- *Use common sense.* Watch your stretch, watch your kick, watch your lines, watch your excited limbs.
- *No aerials on a social dance floor!* This is just more common sense, but it bears repeating. No matter how good you think you are, you have no control over someone swinging out into that huge space you were planning your partner to land in. Save your aerials for a jam circle, competition, performance, or private practice.

We hosted Frankie in Melbourne in 2002 and we all loved how his classes emphasized the importance of respect and acknowledgement on the dance floor. This, too, is an important part of his legacy – because as anyone who knew Frankie knew, respect for others was at his core.

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Taipei Swing will keep following Frankie's spirit, values and version and honor the history of the original swing era as well as the key players in the Lindy Hop revival. We will be continuing to share the joys and spread the happiness of swing dancing with local and international dancers. Taipei Swing invites and welcomes you to join us!



Website: [www.taipeiswing.com](http://www.taipeiswing.com)

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Email: [taipeiswing@gmail.com](mailto:taipeiswing@gmail.com)







# TRIBUTE TO FRANKIE

Artist Manije Alami-Cywinski used her dance studio to paint this tribute to Frankie Manning (facing page). It is acrylic on canvas, approximately 75 x 104 inches (190 x 265 cm).

Manije has donated the painting to the Frankie Manning Foundation. The Frankie Manning Foundation plans to sell it to the highest bidder during Frankie 100, where it will be on display in Terminal 5. The funds will be used for the Ambassador scholarship program.

## **Manije says**

*I am painting this canvas in honor of Frankie Manning.*

*I will never forget my dance class with Frankie ... he was so kind! And over hundred participants were smiling – everybody was happy. The atmosphere in the room was extraordinary .... a very special moment. We always tell the Lindy Hop students in Stuttgart about Frankie Manning and our experience with him.*

Manije has worked as a scene painter at different theaters for many years. In 2005 she started to dance Lindy Hop. The artwork combines her passion for painting & dancing. She lives and works in Stuttgart and Ulm, Germany.

According to the Frankie Manning Foundation:

Inspired by a photograph of the original Lindy Hopper, Frankie Manning, the artist has animated both the dancers and the awed crowd. The scene was Big George's Tavern in Corona, Queens, NYC where Frankie later lived for many years, until his passing at age 95 in 2009. Frankie said his partner, Ann Johnson, was "like a cat" -- no matter which way he threw her in the air, she always landed on her feet.

Big George, the owner of the tavern, was the doorman at Harlem's famous Savoy Ballroom. He must have gotten big tips from his celebrity customers because he was famous for wearing diamond rings on all of his fingers and was able to buy a tavern of his own.



# TO BE A LINDY HOPPER

**Deborah Huisken**

*with input from Mickey Davidson*

When can you legitimately call yourself a Lindy Hopper? When you've done your first swing out? First aerial? Won your first competition? Can you be a Lindy Hopper if you've never been to Harlem, never met Frankie Manning, never danced with someone who learned in the '30s or '40s?

Mickey Davidson (a long-time presence on the New York dance scene who grew up with the original generation of Lindy Hoppers) had this to say:

*When you learn your first swing out, you are starting a journey. There is too much to this dance for an arrival point at the starting point; the learning never ends. Frankie never stopped learning and adapting to fit and get the best a community had at any time.*

It took me a good two or three years of weekly lessons before I began to feel like I could even do this dance at all, much less call myself a Lindy Hopper. During that time one of the best dance classes I took was given by Margaret Batiuchok of the New York Swing Dance Society. We were at the Pines in upstate New York in the early '90s. It was a class offering tips for how to follow any lead. As someone who has since traveled to many different dance scenes and danced with innumerable leaders, what I took from that class has returned to my mind over and over. Because what she taught us was to listen to and move with the music, and connect your steps to that music, no matter what your partner is doing. If their lead for a particular move is different than your next partner's lead for same move (which any follower who dances in more than one scene and with more than a few leaders will tell you happens ALL the time), you will still be in time with the music, which always makes both leader and follower look good, whether you are doing the exact same moves or not.

In my experience, you can take all the lessons you want, but until you spend time on social dance floors with many different leaders and followers (whether you are a leader or a follower yourself) you will not understand the soul of this dance. You will not understand what it really takes to connect with your partner, a connection that will be different with every dance, even if those dances are all danced with the same partner. Because part of the soul of this dance is that it is ever-changing, just like the human beings with whom we dance, who play the music, who dance around us, who watch.

There will never be a rule book or a codification of Lindy Hop steps, as there is in other more standardized dances. A group of us actually tried that back in 1995, at the first World Lindy Hop Championship (with Frankie's participation), thinking we could at least get a common language for what some of the basic steps should be called. The outcry was so intense that we abandoned the effort. In retrospect, I think it would have taken something essential to the nature of the Lindy Hop out of it – the wonderfully surprising, ever-changing improvisational spirit of it.

So, if I were going to take a stab at saying what it takes to be a Lindy Hopper, I might say it takes:

- *An ability to listen to and move with swing music – its asynchronous rhythms and playful improvisations*
- *The ability to adapt, change, and innovate with different partners, different scenes, different bands*
- *A huge smile and a big heart that welcomes newcomers as well as more experienced dancers into your world*
- *The ability to connect with other dancers around you on a social dance floor, apologizing with words or even just a look when you've bumped into them, and recovering gracefully when the inevitable missteps happen*
- *Knowing how to strut your stuff and entertain the crowd if you go into the middle of a circle of dancers, whether you are the best dancer in the crowd or not.*

This list is not exhaustive. But I hope it helps us all to remember that this dance, these connections, this legacy from Frankie are not to be taken lightly. That before you call yourself a Lindy Hopper you might want to begin to understand some of the depth, intelligence, heart, and soul that went into giving this dance the strong foundations on which it stands today. And that becoming a Lindy Hopper is something to be very proud of, that comes with experience, and with time.



*Frankie teaching a class at Herrang with Ewa Staremo Burak (of the Rhythm Hot Shots), 2000. Photo by Brian McGill*

# SWINGING IN THE STARS:

## A Conversation with Usha Lingappa, LINDY HOPPING ASTRONAUT CANDIDATE

*Dan Gorman*

In the 1930s, when swing dance was in its heyday, space travel was the stuff of science fiction. B-movie serials showed Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers zipping off to Mars and other planets as if they were taking a brief vacation. Much has changed since the 1930s. Although swing dance has lost the millions of adherents it once had, swing has been experiencing a worldwide resurgence in recent years. Technology has us regularly traveling into outer space, and NASA is now talking seriously about space colonies. We also know now that space travel is a difficult and long-term project, unlike the portrayal in fantasy films from the Swing Era. Some Americans today question the need for space travel altogether. But even if the mass public may not see the appeal of these two activities, there are still individuals who view swing dance and space travel as valid pursuits, important not so much as means to an end but rather as ends in themselves.

Usha Lingappa is an avid Lindy Hopper who also aspires to be an astronaut. A native of San Francisco, Usha studied astrobiology at Hampshire College, completing a thesis on the chemical origins of life. Currently, she works for NASA Ames Research Center, where her research group studies oxidative stress responses in algae and prepares experiments for transport into Earth orbit. Long-term, Usha wants to become an astronaut for the first Mars mission, either through NASA or through a private space corporation like the Mars Society. Even though a voyage to Mars might be a one-way trip, ending with a permanent colony on the Red Planet, Usha still wants to make the journey. To get a sense of the isolation and daily routine of a trip to Mars, Usha has participated in two simulated space missions at the Mars Desert Research Station, an institute in the Utah high desert sponsored by the Mars Society.

During her most recent trip to MDRS, Usha taught her crewmembers the Shim-Sham to pass the time. Their video of the routine, featuring three crewmembers dancing in

bulky spacesuits, has since gone viral on the Internet. Usha may be setting in motion a new trend of aspiring astronauts studying swing dance – one of her fellow crewmembers, a finalist for Mars One’s privately funded Mars mission, is now studying jazz dance as a result of the Shim-Sham video. Usha Lingappa therefore operates at a fascinating intersection of science and jazz culture.

According to Cynthia Millman, Frankie always loved stargazing and watching the night sky. Now, instead of imagining the heavens, Lindy Hoppers may actually be headed there, and the implications are quite thought-provoking. The astronauts sent to colonize another planet would constitute a representative sample of humanity; as such, their hobbies, their talents, and their beliefs would stand for the best that our species has to offer. By wishing to include Lindy Hop in the first manned mission to Mars, Usha and her peers suggest that swing dance ranks among the finest cultural creations of the human race, worthy of being spread on an extremely large scale, even to the surface of an alien world. Usha’s ambition to do the Shim-Sham on Mars also suggests that the swing dance revival has long-term viability, for no flight to Mars is likely to launch before the 2020s, at the earliest.

I spoke with Usha recently to get her thoughts on swing dance, space travel, their surprising similarities, and the future.

**DG:** Usha, tell our readers a bit about how you initially got involved with swing dancing.

**UL:** I don’t really remember what got me into swing dancing, it wasn’t a terribly involved thought process. I think I just thought, why not try this, and made a spur of the moment decision to show up to my first lesson. But pretty immediately I was completely hooked.





**DG:** I think that's how it is for a lot of people today. Most Americans lack a frame of reference for social dance, so they try it on a lark when they hear about local dancing, and suddenly they're immersed in this vibrant subculture. What have been your favorite Lindy Exchanges to attend?

**UL:** Herräng. Does that count? (Not an exchange, exactly.)

**DG:** Yes, I'd say Herräng certainly counts! You've made one of the big journeys for swing dance on this planet. Which reminds me of your interest in astronautics – someday, you want to make the trip to Mars.

**UL:** I hope to! Funnily, Herräng was actually the first time I traveled for dance at all outside of the Bay Area. Go big or go home?

**DG:** That's fair to say. Tell me a bit about life as a NASA scientist. That has to be an exciting line of work, especially as Congress just increased NASA's budget, and with the launch of the Orion spacecraft later this year.

**UL:** I work at NASA Ames Research Center, in the Exobiology Branch, which is part of the Space Sciences Division. I love it. Astrobiology is a very exciting field to be in right now because it is so multidisciplinary – it exists at the interface of biology, chemistry, geology, and astrophysics, and therefore facilitates a lot of outside-the-box thinking. It is also a new and growing field, and it's absolutely thrilling for me to be at the cutting edge of that this early in my career. The other thing that I love about NASA is the cachet it has in having contributed to inspiring so many people to pursue the sciences. Outside of work, I teach space science workshops for elementary and middle school enrichment programs, and being affiliated with NASA gives me access to a lot of great education/outreach resources. I have even been able to bring some of my students on field trips to the base, which is super exciting for me and for them.

**DG:** There seems to be a major current of optimism in your work as a scientist and a science educator. In past decades, people assumed that the future would always be better than the present, but if our current problems with climate change are any indication, progress is not inevitable. Nonetheless, even with the challenges of our era, you still are willing to work with science and rocketry – fields devoted to that dream of a better future – and getting kids excited about that. Do you see science as fundamentally optimistic?

**UL:** In my personal philosophy, yes. Although, I don't think that is requisite for science in general, science is whatever the people pursuing it make it [much like dance]. For me, optimism is a huge motivating factor. I see a lot of potential for impacting the challenges of our era in pursuing science. Progress may not be inevitable, but that isn't a reason not to try.

**DG:** That sentence could also describe learning how to dance, you know.

**UL:** Absolutely!

**DG:** This might be a good time to discuss your most famous instance of teaching the Lindy Hop – your video of spacesuit-clad scientists dancing the Shim-Sham for New Year’s Day 2014.

**UL:** That project really wasn’t terribly premeditated. One of my San Francisco Lindy Hop friends proposed the idea as a joke before I left for MDRS, so the seed was already planted. It was an awesome idea, but I never seriously planned on actually making it happen. I met the rest of my crew (a group of scientists, engineers, and an artist/journalist) for our mission pre-brief in Grand Junction, CO, the night before we headed out to the Hab [the MDRS Habitat]. Later that evening, getting to know each other a little, my passion for Lindy Hop inevitably came up. The rest of my crew expressed considerably more interest than I expected (at home, my dance life and my work life are pretty much separate worlds).

Once we entered our simulation, it didn’t take long before we started to feel a little cooped up. Some of my crewmates urged me to teach them to dance a little, and I (faced with the prospect of not dancing for 3 weeks, something I haven’t done since I took up Lindy Hop) loved the idea. We started with a little bit of social dancing, but the logistics were somewhat difficult (very limited space, several of them wanting to learn to lead and only one wanting to learn to follow), so I thought that maybe solo jazz would be more fitting. That’s when the Shim-Sham idea resurfaced. They were excited about learning it, so that’s what we did.

We were only able to do EVAs (Extra Vehicular Activities – suiting up to do stuff outside) with detailed planning, specific science goals, and approval from Mission Support, so we couldn’t do a dedicated excursion just for filming the Shim-Sham. Instead, we worked it into another one, which was the best available opportunity. Unfortunately, it meant that Danielle Young Smith, one of the crewmembers who learned the routine, wasn’t able to dance in the video because she had to stay in the Hab as our CAPCOM. Dancers in the video are myself, Michael Bouchard (our Crew Geologist), and Charles Parrish (our GreenHab Officer). Dancing in the suits was really difficult. They are heavy, constraining, and hot. The pack, helmet, and boots made me feel clunky and clumsy. And every time I jumped, I could hear loose parts rattling around in the pack, and I was terrified we were going to break something (we didn’t, phewf).

But oh man. It was so much fun.

Working at MDRS is like playing astronaut; you’re basically practicing for Mars. In that context, the Mars-esque landscape of the Utah desert, especially when seen through the slightly distorted visibility of a spacesuit helmet, is just thrilling. You’re immersed in a sense of sheer awe and possibility. Dancing on top of that is the best feeling in the world.

**DG:** Which makes me wonder what it would be like dancing on another planet – in your ideal case, Mars. Zero gravity or reduced gravity environments cause bones to weaken over time, so exercise is essential for astronauts. You couldn’t social dance en route to Mars, unless your ship had artificial gravity, but once you were on the planet’s surface, you’d be good to go. Do you think Lindy Hop or other swing dance variants could have a place within astronauts’ lifestyles on Mars?

**UL:** Absolutely, especially if I have anything to do with it. Swing dancing is such a wonderful mode of creative expression, human connection, exercise, and social outlet. It would be fascinating to see how this Earth tradition might evolve in a Martian habitat. And in fractional gravity... imagine the aerials!

**DG:** True! Although I’m not sure if the low ceilings of NASA habitats would be conducive to aerials. Perhaps more balboa....

**UL:** Haha, good point. Also, fast dancing would be quite challenging. I often think about slower bluesy dancing on Mars, as well.

**DG:** Do you think there could be a psychological benefit to introducing dance among astronauts, as a supplement to traditional solitary exercises?

**UL:** I definitely think that introducing dance among astronauts could be hugely beneficial. Physically, for coordination, balance, concentration, and just general conditioning, but also mentally, both as a form of creative expression and for the mental exercise of learning to remember choreography, or even just to use your body in different ways. Psychologically, I don’t think that you need to look any farther than the fact that it is so much fun (AND a form of creative expression AND good exercise!!!) to see huge benefits. One of my personal heroes, astronaut Mae Jemison, is quoted for having said: “Many people do not see a connection between science and dance, but I consider them both to be expressions of the boundless creativity that people have to share with one another” (source: <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/09/16/style/chronicle-917092.html>).

**DG:** The one caveat to the creativity of partnered swing dance, though, is the need for partners, who provide inspiration and encouragement. If you went on a mission to

Mars, it might very well be one-way, due to the dangerous exposure to solar radiation on the way there, as well as the damage to eyesight that comes from living in zero gravity. Basically, you'd only have a few dance partners for the rest of your life.

**UL:** That's true, although a few partners is better than no partners. And frankly, limited diversity of dance partnership is probably one of the smaller consequences of spending the rest of your life with the company of only a few other people.

**DG:** Of course. I guess it's just hard for me to imagine taking that journey. Space travel is appealing, but to leave everything we have here behind, forever?

**UL:** What it always comes back to for me is what it would be for. The possibility of finding life off of this planet (and what that would mean for our understanding of what life is, and its extent in the universe, and its value) is huge for me, and something that I would sacrifice a whole lot to contribute to. In the context of Mars specifically, there are a lot of circumstances that, given the opportunity to go, I wouldn't. It would depend on the state of things on Earth, the political agenda of the mission, its stance on planetary protection, and whether I saw it really helping humanity or not.

When I say I really want to go to Mars, what I really mean is, I really want to go to Mars in the right context.

**DG:** What are the next steps for you to gain the skills needed as an astronaut?

**UL:** Since I want to be a science mission specialist, my next step is to go back to school for my PhD, which I plan to do in the next couple years.

**DG:** And what goals do you have in regard to swing dance in the next few years?

**UL:** Besides just continuous improvement? Right now, in addition to working on my social dancing, I'm excited about performance. I recently joined a performance group, and I'd like to get more into that side of lindy hop.

**DG:** Are you going to Frankie 100?

**UL:** Absolutely!!

**DG:** Good for you! Does the centennial of Frankie Manning's birth have any special significance for you?

**UL:** As a Lindy Hopper, of course it does. I think it's

wonderful that we are taking this opportunity to commemorate and continue spreading Frankie's values. I hope that the swing dance world never loses that. I was never lucky enough to meet Frankie myself, but I love that our community is so strongly built on his legacy.

**DG:** It's interesting that space travel was something only of high fantasy in the 1930s and 1940s, when Frankie Manning enjoyed his first years as a professional dancer. In one human lifetime, we've gone from space travel happening only in H.G. Wells and Edgar Rice Burroughs novels to space travel being seen as routine, even dull, by the general public.

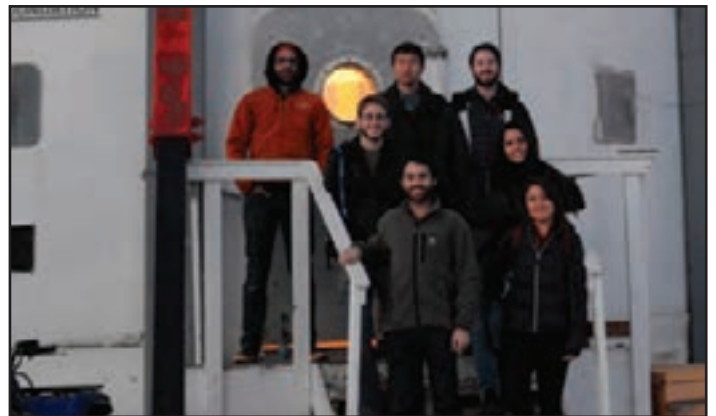
**UL:** Absolutely. It's a very exciting time to be alive. I can't wait to see what else changes over the course of our lifetimes. Who knows, maybe in a few short decades we'll be planning interplanetary lindy exchanges like they're no big deal.

**DG:** Usha, this has been a very unique discussion of science and dance. Do you have any final thoughts about your work as perhaps the first Lindy Hopper astronaut candidate?

**UL:** Lindy Hop is an art form that I love. I plan on dancing for the rest of my life, and that means bringing it with me wherever I end up, whether that's on this world or off of it.

If I do end up in a position to spread Lindy Hop (and Frankie's legacy) to another planet, I will be thrilled and honored.

*Dan Gorman is a recent graduate of the University of Rochester. Groove Juice Swing in Rochester is his favorite place to swing dance. He hopes to continue writing and Lindy Hopping in years to come.*



*Previous spread: Charles Parrish, Usha Lingappa, Michael Bouchard, members of MDRS Crew 132 during simulated mission to Mars in the Utah High Desert, Mars Desert Research Station, Hanksville, Utah, 2014. Below: MDRS Crew 132- back row: Ian Etter (crew artist/journalist), Hiroyuki Miyajima (crew engineer), Charles Parrish (greenhab officer, bioengineer); middle row: Michael Bouchard (crew geologist), Usha Lingappa (executive officer, astrobiologist); front row: Nick Orenstein (commander, engineer), Dani YoungSmith (crew biologist). Photos courtesy of Usha Lingappa*



# THE BUSINESS OF LINDY HOP

**Zack Richard** (Canada)

with contributions from **Simon Selmon** (England),

**Scott Cupit** (Australia), **Sing Lim** (Singapore)

**Didier Jean-François**, (Canada), **Natalie Gomes** (USA)

and **Silvia Palazzolo** (Italy)

To talk about the business of Lindy Hop is a daunting task, because at its core, this beautiful dance is all about emotion. Monetizing emotion is something that doesn't sit quite right with a lot of people – how many times has a business-oriented Lindy Hopper heard variations of the sentence “you're doing it for the money – you're not a real Lindy Hopper!”

As an umpteenth generation Lindy Hopper, I didn't get to spend as much time with Frankie Manning as I wished. On the few occasions where I was given the opportunity to do so, my often-crippling shyness was no match for neither his charisma or the sea of people always surrounding him. What I always interpreted as sheer cowardice was also, now that I think back on it, a pass off the board – to employ a very Canadian analogy – to the greatness of the man. Like many of us, the hours I spent watching Frankie Manning on screen vastly outnumber the times I've seen him live – but whether I was watching his steps in slow motion, stretching the technology of VCR to its limits, or taking one of his classes, what always struck me was his total embodiment of the Lindy Hop spirit. His pervasive influence is so vast that I, like most of us, simply refer to him as “Frankie”, and we do it with a true, profound and sincere love in our hearts.

To me it's rather ironic that many of today's dancers would decry the practice of instilling business into Lindy Hop while at the same time championing Frankie's legacy – himself a seasoned pro dancer who travelled around the world to dance and got paid for it, both in the forties and in more recent years. While not dismissing those who share this dichotomic opinion, we have to ask ourselves if that doesn't say more about their own biased view of the world instead of the actual reality.

It's a popular view in the collective imagination that businesses are inherently evil – whether you're watching *Spiderman*, *Supersize Me* or *Avatar*, the discourse is mostly that if businesses could kidnap orphaned children, harvest their organs and sell them for a profit, they would do so without a moment of hesitation and laugh on their way to the bank while sharing the disturbing videos on YouTube.

Additionally, Lindy Hop is the dance of freedom par excellence. Born out of jazz – one of the first truly American art forms – Lindy Hop is the story of a people overcoming incredibly stacked odds to create something beautiful and lasting. In the world of dancing, Lindy Hop is more Mahatma Gandhi than John D. Rockefeller. By its nature, it's quintessentially opposed to the way a lot of people think about “business”.

In this context, how could we talk about the “Business of Lindy Hop” with a straight face?

## A MEANS TO A HIGHER END

Sticking “business” and “Lindy Hop” in the same sentence is a hot-button issue for many dance aficionados, but to really reconcile the idea of Lindy Hop as an art form with the concept of business, we have to keep in mind that, for the vast majority of business people in the world of Lindy Hop, it's truly not about the money: the business is a tool to wield with great care and responsibility.

It's a means to a higher end.

That end, of course, is to insure the survival of this beautiful art form, to make the world discover and fall in love with the rhythm, the joy, the ecstasy of Lindy Hop.

If you take a second to talk openly with any Lindy Hop business owner, any professional dance teacher, there is one thread that will, under a million facets, come back: their pure love of the dance, their desire to share it, and their borderline lunatic disregard of anything else. As Simon Selmon, founder of the London Swing Dance Society, puts it:

*Very early on when I started dancing for a living people offered me advice telling me there is more money in modern jive or in franchising the Lindy, etc, etc... Don't get me wrong I want to make as much money as the next person – who doesn't – but I couldn't sell short what I believed in. I like many teachers around the world didn't go into dancing for the money but because we found something we loved, that ignited a spark in our lives and wanted to share that with others.*

More from Scott Cupit, owner and founder of Swing Patrol in Australia:

*I had a well-paid job. I worked in banking with a great group of people and the bank had just paid for my degree. I was on an executive trainee programme and all was well. Can you imagine the day I phoned my father telling him I was leaving all this to teach swing dancing? I remember that phone call to this day... It was sort of awkward!*

This is not the profile of people looking forward to rolling in their studio parking lot with their second Mercedes, hiring flower girls to spread endangered tulips' petals on their path to class.

Despite his early reserves, Frankie soon embraced that notion of sharing fully and generously. Lindy Hop is infectious in nature – jazz is ingrained in our collective brain, and Lindy Hop is an almost natural response to it. A vast number of people literally turn their lives upside down when they discover Lindy Hop – moving to different cities, travelling abroad, switching jobs to accommodate their dance schedule – and embrace the happiness it brings them. Isn't an equally natural response also to want to share it with others (sometimes to the point of being, pardon my French, friggin' annoying to non-dancing friends) ?

Of course it is, imaginary interlocutor. Of course it is.

A business is just one of the many tools that enable us to do just that: sharing this extraordinary passion.

## THE BUSINESS MODEL

Frankie was no stranger to dabbling in business: after serving his country in the most kick-ass way possible as a soldier on the Pacific front during World War II, he kept his dance troupe, the Congaroos, going for many years before getting a steady job in the postal service.

A business is, of course, not the only way to keep Lindy Hop an alive dance form: one could go for a non-profit collective, for example (although we're tempted to round that up with businesses, since most work largely as businesses funded partly or entirely by government grants), or give classes for free in a Methodist church basement. Many small-town scenes are run entirely by volunteers, and no one is questioning their passion and love for the dance.

So what is so interesting about a Lindy Hop business model? First of all, having someone do it as an actual job ensures continuity: we've all witnessed entire scenes whither and die because volunteers started losing interest or simply ran out of time to devote to it. One or several persons making it their top priority in life actually enhances the quality of the dance and the activities surrounding it, especially



in our highly connected world where people can easily make themselves aware of what Lindy Hop truly looks like. As with anything else, a well-run business will keep top specialists interested who would, otherwise, soon move on to other ventures. This is true of local schools and national events alike: if we didn't have top quality events around the world, we couldn't have so many dedicated teachers, so much exchange and inspiration – one of the very pillars of the spirit of Lindy Hop.

If we take it one step further, a properly built business ensures perennity. Dance school owners with half a brain will not put all their money on one horse, so to speak, but instead make sure that the business survives as an entity of its own regardless of the people in it. One could whine endlessly about teachers who have, to put it politely, a shaking grasp of Lindy Hop technique, but if the true spirit of the dance lives on, if the ever-so-celebrated mission statement of the business is to celebrate and share said spirit, it really is a win-win. Not every dancer at the Savoy was Frankie Manning. And no teacher alive, dead, or still to be born will ever come close to Frankie Manning. But we have to be as indulgent with them as Frankie was, in countless ways, with us. We don't have to love their dancing, but we can love their spirit. We can still try. We can still push on and carry on his legacy, each in our own small way.

## SUSTAINABILITY AND COMPETITION

A popular mistake people make when analyzing the business of Lindy Hop – because that's, I'm sure, a national pastime in many countries – is blaming a lack of sustainability on an overpopulation of teachers (or events). While in a sense that's true, it's a crucial fallacy to equate dancing with, for example, selling toilet paper. Of course, five stores specialized in toilet paper in one small town will soon destroy each other – the product is physical and finite (anyone who, to their sheer terror, prematurely got at the end of a roll in an airplane bathroom after a particularly vicious battle with an end of terminal burrito knows what we're talking about).

The first and foremost nuance when we speak about Lindy Hop in terms of economics lies in the community. The business is quite literally a consequence of the community – it's a social dance after all. The quality of the community, of the teachers, of the people in it, is a crucial aspect of a good product. As Didier Jean-François, owner of the Swinging Air Force in Montreal, says:

*It's a simple virtuous cycle based in competition and human behavior... Word of mouth is the best publicity, students who learn dance tend to show up at dances and join a local or even international community and as they*

*do they spread the word about teachers they like and successful dancers get asked "where did you learn". Similarly the most successful teachers get paid and stay motivated to stay in the dance. They have the economic freedom to do so.*

As stated in the spiritually-driven but still actual documentary *Field of Dreams* starring Kevin Costner, "build it and they will come"... A solid and honest business will foster a solid community, with the joy of Lindy Hop and the spirit that Frankie held dear at its core.

Dishonest and divisive competition is more a result of bad people than of the existence of businesses themselves. Once the Dark Side gets a hold of teachers or organizers, things can get ugly, but they get ugly regardless of their status as business persons or volunteers. We've all heard terrible stories about scene wars, but they had little to do with the nature of businesses and a lot to do with miscommunication, disagreements and tempers.

Will some schools fail because of competition? Yes. Will some events be cancelled? Sure. Will some teachers slowly fade out of the scene and go back to the 9-to-5? Guaranteed. But the main cause of it will be, let's be brutally honest, plain dumb luck.

Sure, some businesses that survive do have incredibly savvy and sexy people running it. People who made all the right decisions, and are basically dance tycoons... But more often than not – and I say this as a person who's ran swing dance businesses for more than a decade – it's all about luck first. Then it's all the rest: talent, hard work, personality, vision, all the buzzwords you will hear those businesspersons blurt out when asked why they've become successful. Sometimes, they just forget how lucky they were – socially, financially, or circumstantially. But of all the things they'll ramble about, they'll rarely mention how competition was scarce and that was a key to their success. You may actually hear things like "there was absolutely no Lindy Hop here when I began so it was hard to start up".

Competition can, to the contrary, be the kindle that will light the fire of innovation, of pushing the boundaries forward – is there no greater example of that in the Lindy world than Frankie and Frieda's invention of the first air step, which they prepared for the very purpose of entering a battle against Frankie's idol Shorty George? Would we have all those spectacular steps and ideas if the spirit of one-upmanship was not, at the very least, a small part of what constitutes the Lindy Hop, this typical American child, always hungry for its own betterment?

As Natalie Gomes from New Orleans puts it:



*[Frankie] was an innovator and always pushed the envelope. When everyone was dancing straight, he started dancing low. He made up the first aerial. He set a trend.*

*I aspired to all that. One of his best compliments to my partner and I was “you guys took it to a whole other level” referring to our performances.*

As Frankie did, let competition in all its forms inspire us and inflate the sails of our ships.

## THE BUSINESS AS A COMMUNAL ENTITY

If you're looking to start out as business owners, here's an invaluable perspective to always keep in mind: businesses, under different guises, can be the most solid cornerstones of local scenes.

Because they usually have both the means and the incentive, they're usually the most efficient at recruiting new dancers – the blood of any scene.

Because they want those people to keep dancing, they will also hold quality local events and dances.

Because they want their clients to stay happy and content, they will go to great lengths to listen to them and try to balance between what they need as dancers and what they want as customers, an aspect with which a volunteer teacher could easily become disgruntled – “this is the way I teach, and I do it for nothing, so just don't dance if you don't want to do it my way”.

Because they want their customers to keep coming back, they will offer not only a nice and respectful environment, but also strive to learn, innovate, and bring in as many positive influences as they can. An intelligent business knows that the source of the product matters little, as long as the client keeps coming back to their store to buy it – that's why you're not forced to buy the crappy off-brand peanut butter at your local grocery store.

Many think that businesses, by nature, can't possibly work together towards creating a truly great scene – and many fragmented scenes all over the world seem to confirm this idea. But this train of thought is a simple causal fallacy, an easy go-to mind-trap: just because there are fusses and disses in a dance scene, and businesses are present in the scene, doesn't mean that businesses are the inherent cause of the feuds. As a matter of fact, a two-second look at most broken scenes will quickly pinpoint the cause of most disputes: people and their gigantic, misplaced egos.



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*Photos above: Frankie Manning and Chazz Young in Herräng  
Photos courtesy Brian McGill*

When you run a business, your ego has to take a step to the side – it's not the most important thing in life anymore. Your business is what puts food on the table. It's an incredibly challenging task to constantly come back to what's best for your business, hence, what's best for the dancers, hence, what's best for the community as a whole. Do you want to spend time and effort on constantly fighting to keep students under a protective shell? Would you rather have 50 students of your own, or share a pool of 500 students with other schools? Do you want to keep your students longer because they don't feel like they have to hide if they go to a competitor's dance night? These are all important questions to ask when it comes to truly using the power of business towards community building.

There are plenty of dance scenes with multiple businesses that work very well together, attending each other's dances, partnering up with each other for events and special occasions, even sharing teachers from time to time. One needs to look no further than Montreal for a great example of how businesses can work in harmony towards building a great community. All it takes sometimes is a little bit more "I don't like you, you don't like me, but let's do this" attitude, as taught in the timeless motion picture classic *Lethal Weapon*.

Does it take time and effort? Absolutely. Is it a total pain from time to time? You bet.

But in the collaborative spirit of Lindy Hop, it's really the only thing that truly makes sense.

## BUSINESS MODELS... AND MODEL BUSINESSES

While researching this article (i.e. eating Lay's chips and exchanging emails with people), the more I exchanged with Lindy Hop business owners from around the world, the more I realized a crucial truth: had it not been for Frankie and the way he touched people from all ways of life, the Lindy Hop business probably would not have been as profoundly infused with the spirit of the dance as it is today. Despite his undeniable talent, what made our Ambassador of Lindy Hop so genuinely and instantaneously embraceable was his profound humanity – a role model in the purest form of the word, he was never shy or embarrassed by his gift. Unpretentious as Frankie was, he still was incredibly generous with it, despite the fact that he probably never planned he would spend his later years teaching a decades-old dance. He admirably went with the flow and became our most immediately recognizable icon.

He became Frankie.

He infused us with the passion of dancing that is at the source of so many Lindy Hop businesses around the globe. As Sing Yuen Lim from Jitterbugs Swingapore puts it:

*The business motto is "To inspire our students to be the best they can be through sharing our love for dance." Just as Frankie inspired me to be humble, to be inclusive, to be creative, I hope that the studio can teach positive values to all the students. [...] I trained as a lawyer and I worked as a copywriter. But when I decided to open a swing business it was because it was something I loved! Lindy hop changed and saved my life. I had not understood before what it was to do something I loved, as opposed to something I was told to do. Lindy Hop brought me so much joy, friends and travel – I want to share it with as many people as possible.*

Among the many factors that would metamorphose a dilettante into an entrepreneur, the silver thread is always a strong, almost unstoppable desire to create – and share. Much like certain unfortunate internet memes, the passion of business, once it's taken hold, never goes away. And, as Lindy Hop can become a beautiful piece of art in the right hands, so can a Lindy Hop business.

The initial spark is certainly similar, and that's why we can say that, as Frankie was a model for all of us, good Lindy Hop businesses are a model not only for other businesses, competitors and teachers, but for students as well.

Most good business owners strive to make their business inspiring, because they first were inspired – they know how that feels, and they know that's gold. I don't believe a business is inherently good or evil – it all depends on who is behind it, and how they can promote the values and benefits of Lindy Hop in a healthy way. We are lucky in the sense that we're not selling atomic rifles powered by the tears of kittens here. Dancing is an easy commodity to keep on the good side: it's got social, physical and psychological benefits that far outweigh most hobbies on the market. It's a visceral need going back thousands of years in the past when some dude or dudette with an unkempt beard started beating two bones together. It can give you the spark necessary to turn your life around.

More often than not, we can directly trace that spark back to Frankie Manning. It was certainly the case for Silvia Palazzolo from Italy, one of the most prolific event organizers in Europe:

*I didn't organize swing events before meeting Frankie. When I first had him in Italy, I was totally ignorant and had no clue about what was going on. I didn't know anything about Lindy Hop, I was pretty ignorant about the music and when he spoke I hardly understood the names of the people he mentioned and that now are so*

important in my life. But at the end of the lecture he gave, for which I was the translator in public, he talked to me and he said to me that I had to keep doing that. "this? this what?" "Bringing joy in people's lives, organizing events". From that moment on, he kind of took me under his wing and tried to patiently explain me what I needed to know. I did many mistakes at which sometimes he laughed too, but he was totally responsible of me starting to organize swing events on a larger scale. Before meeting him, I had no idea I could have those skills.

Yes, we must be wary of the "ballroom studio model" that hires undertrained and underpaid staff who painfully review fifteen years old instructional videos and then regurgitate washed-out, dumbed-down material to the students. To that we say: whatever their level, keep your teachers and yourself well informed and inspired to strive for betterment. Turn to Frankie and his constant need to create and top himself.

Yes, we will always hear about – or take an enthusiastic part in – various feuds in the dance scene, whether local or international. Take the time to understand the different stances; be forgiving with others but also with yourself; be as patient as Frankie was with us, and remember that however differently we do our swingout, we all share the same family tree.

And finally, whether your own Lindy Hop business works or not, remember that Frankie spent the better part of 30 years working in a post office – more years working the same, non-dancing job than some of you have walked the Earth. Nothing you do for a living is beneath or above who you are as a person, and you are not more of a failure for it – or more of a success, for that matter. Remember Frankie's humility, and remember his pride. Regardless of your means of employment, really, you can always look back at what he stood for and ask yourself: what would Frankie do?

I can't guarantee you, and he wouldn't himself, that it would always be the exact right thing, but I can tell you it's always going to be a darn fine starting point.

*Zack Richard has been a full-time dancer, business owner and international teacher for the better part of ten years. He's currently heading the Swing ConneXion Studios in Montreal, Canada.*



One must embrace the chaos within to give birth to a dancing star  
–NIETZSCHE

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We want to acknowledge and thank Frankie for his talent, generosity, kindness and love, and for inspiring us all to keep on dancing!



# SO YOU THINK YOU CAN START A DANCE BUSINESS

**Zack Richard**

A lot of you talented folks out there may be toying with the idea of making a full-time career involving dancing - whether as a teacher, performer, event organizer, etc... But what does it mean, and what do you need to achieve it? Here are a few tips, warnings and pieces of advice from people who've done it before:

## ***It's not about the dancing***

Most of what you will actually manage will not be dancing at all. You'll need marketing, human resources, planning, finances, web presence... Basically everything any business needs!

## ***You won't roll in dough***

If you translate your income in hourly salary, you'll soon realize that being a Lindy Hop business owner is not what will pay for your cozy dream condo bordering the Mediterranean Sea. You'll have to do it for yourself, for your own passion, and for the people! Where would the country be without your expertly crafted dance events?

## ***Find a mission, and stick to it***

Enunciate the core tenets of your business - what makes it a unique and special snowflake. Every single decision you take as a business owner should go towards that goal - in the business world, that's called a mission statement. For example, Google's mission statement is to "organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful".

## ***You will pick up ALL the slack***

When your Dj can't make it; when your teacher is sick; when the web person doesn't make an update... The buck stops with you, and you're ultimately responsible for everything that's going on.

## ***With great power...***

...comes great responsibility. Being a (perhaps budding) community leader entails a great deal of responsibility, as you will be a model for the teachers you hire as well as the students you train. Being kind, open and generous is not just a mere option anymore: it's a norm.

## ***Know your value***

As with all forms of art, you will be pestered by all sorts of organizations to offer your services for free "in exchange of visibility/experience/a firm but gentle handshake". Make sure to wisely choose those so-called opportunities, and don't be afraid to say no when it clearly will not benefit you, your team, or your business.

## ***Take one for the team***

It might seem counter-intuitive, but sometimes you need to throw the community a bone. Whether this takes the form of a monthly dance that you run at a (reasonable) loss in an amazing venue, or an awesome but costly event featuring exciting international teachers, don't let a pragmatic lack of profits stop you from doing great things from time to time. The indirect benefits for your business may surprise you.

## ***You will need to make more money than you think***

As unsavory as that is to many of us, particularly when we are first starting out, it is going to be important for the health of your endeavor (and you!) to make enough money overall to not only cover your living costs, but also those of the venues you rent, the rights to the music you use, your website expenses, and many more little things you're not even thinking about when you just hold "a job". Do be sure to track your finances, and be practical and responsible around them, or you won't have a business for long.

## ***Don't be a sheep***

It's a hard thing to say, but a (luckily very small) percentage of people will always look for ways to leech on you. Have firm policies in place that don't allow problem customers from becoming even more problematic... And don't be afraid to cut collaborators loose if they're proving to objectively be a nuisance to your business. See yourself as your business' shepherd.

## ***Surround yourself well***

One single person usually can't do everything very well. Make sure to surround yourself with volunteers or employees who are dedicated to your mission statement, and especially make sure they've been given all the necessary tools to do their jobs well!

## ***You will make mistakes***

It's going to happen whether you like it or not. The best thing to do is to acknowledge them, apologize if need be, yell a slam poetry piece about it if you feel like it's the best thing to do, and forgive yourself. Never forget, always forgive, and readjust your trajectory when necessary.

## ***Enjoy the journey***

Whether your business eventually fails or thrives, remember one absolutely cheesy thing: it's all about the love. Always look for the best, always hire the best, always do your best. That doesn't mean your business will not fail, but it means that YOU will be a success. And that's the most important thing.



*Roseland Ballroom, Happy Birthday  
Frankie Marquee Photo by Brian McGill*





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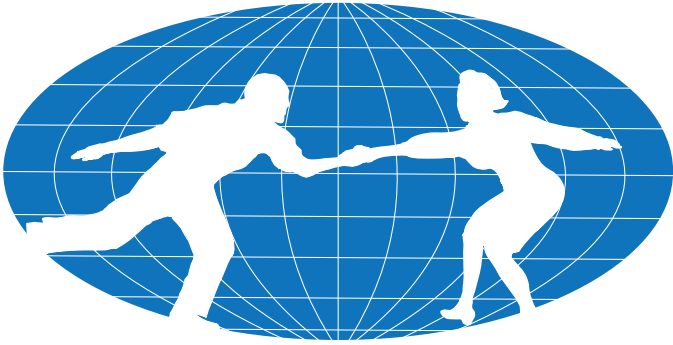
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# WORLD LINDY HOP DAY



*David Ljung Madison on behalf  
of the World Lindy Hop Day organizers*

May 26th would have been Frankie Manning's 100th birthday, and is the reason behind Frankie100, but we are working on making May 26th into something much bigger, to honor Frankie and to honor the Lindy Hop.

## **May 26th is World Lindy Hop Day.**

In the 1920s, Lindy Hop emerged along with swing music as an art form that broke the color barrier and brought people together. During a time in America when segregation was still pervasive, the Savoy Ballroom (where the Lindy Hop originated) was one place where people of all races and backgrounds could come together and share a common love – swing music and dance.

Although it had started to travel the world in the '30s, during the War years, Lindy Hop spread even further beyond its American roots and started to be enjoyed in a mass artistic and cultural exchange between people across the globe. GIs brought their favorite music and dance with them everywhere they went, and when they left, it stayed behind as a common legacy.

In the mid-'80s, young people from Sweden, California, the UK, and NYC saw old movie clips of the by-now-dormant dance, and went in search of any remaining original dancers. What emerged in the '20s as a joyous antidote to slavery and repression in all forms thus morphed once again into a cross-cultural phenomenon; an international network

of Lindy Hoppers. Since that time, dancers around the world have rediscovered the joy and connection of Lindy Hop, from France to Korea to Mozambique to Australia, Europe, Russia, North America, and beyond.

Almost a century after people started swinging out, Lindy Hop has continued to travel the globe and has become a worldwide phenomenon. Lindy Hop is an art form, an expression of joy, and a social community.

With the advent of technology, the world is becoming a smaller place, and Lindy Hop is a prime beneficiary (and perhaps as well a driver) of people connecting with and discovering more about those with whom they inhabit the planet, through the worldwide web and social media.

With an ever-increasing number of events around the world – from local dances to camps every weekend to Herräng, a 5-week annual dance camp in Sweden that is a mecca for Lindy Hoppers worldwide; to global virtual celebrations of the lives of some of the dance's creators – Lindy Hop has become a truly transcultural artistic exchange.

Oblivious to language, cultural, or political barriers, Lindy Hop today is an impetus for organic global intra-cultural connection, promoting – at the most basic levels of human interaction – peace, understanding, and unity.

Because Lindy Hop and swing are at their core improvisational art forms, each dancer has a legacy of freedom to create their own moves, choreography, and response to the music, which changes with each musician. We are all different shades of the same color.

A team of people from Frankie100 and the Frankie Manning Foundation have been working hard to get May 26th recognized as World Lindy Hop Day. Currently WLHD has been accepted to the prestigious Chase's Calendar of Events. We are also working with various governmental organizations such as UNESCO in order to increase the acceptance of May 26th as WLHD.

## **We need your help!**

Whether it's someone who happens to have connections in a governmental organization such as UNESCO or just someone who wants to help spread the love of Lindy Hop, we can use help in getting this job done! If you can help, please contact us by visiting: [www.worldlindyhopday.com](http://www.worldlindyhopday.com)



*Frankie performing in England, 1994*  
*Brian McGill*

# FRANKIE & WE

*Jamin Jackson*

If Frankie had decided to close the door to his past life, swing as we know it could have been forever sealed in history. None of our lives would have crossed, dance camps around the globe wouldn't exist the same way we have them today, and you definitely wouldn't be reading this article.

That door he opened was no small gesture – in it rested the memories of a world in transition. Those living at that time felt the residual choke hold of the great depression-enduring the sting of socio economic differences, and legislation that fought to keep human beings separated based on their skin color. The times were not easy to live.

In the midst of that chaos, the spirit of swing burned into the hearts of a generation reminding the world that we are not so different. Its spirit couldn't be silenced by politicians, or isolated to one side of town by those afraid of the truth. No, the door that Frankie reopened was enormous, and allowed us to walk into his world without leaving our own. Overnight we inherited a reawakening movement without having to share in the same struggles that the original generation had to endure.

Recently I turned 35 and sat reflecting on my life. As I pondered all the people and scenarios that have directly impacted my journey, I remembered the words of one of my mentors in dance. Steven Mitchell said, "People don't find Lindy Hop, Lindy Hop finds them." I believe him. Though some of our stories may be more dramatic, we all have a unique story that brought us to swing that is worth listening to. We've been singled out individually by this infectious culture and may not completely understand all the far-reaching implications of our decision. It doesn't matter if we are that small fraction of 1% who are professional instructors, or the 99% majority – we are in, and deputized to share the joy that we experience in this culture with our world of influence. Fires start small, and so do world-changing movements.

A powerful match has been ignited, and now it's time to fan the flames. Our swing culture is growing past the limits of borders, languages, cultures, socio-economic differences,

and skin colors. Its soul is burning in the hearts of so many, and we have the power to infect new generations to come with our movement. But will we? With over 6 billion people in the world compared to our thousands – we have no option to become alumni or cheer in the stands reminiscing about "how things use to be." We must remain in the game by keeping our hearts and hands open, ready to share what we know, and help others do the same. Frankie did.

It doesn't matter if we are the most experienced mature dancer or the novice newbie full of energy, we are in. You may be a musician who is passionate about the music – keep the fire alive. You may be passionate about starting a small event for your community – dream bigger. You may be a volunteer who feels your contribution doesn't really make a difference – it does. If you are lost in identifying how you can share, start with what is in your hand. Frankie represented one extraordinary person doing something outside of the ordinary. He could have easily sealed off his experiences to the confines of his memory. But he didn't. He kept his hands open and ready to give. That contagious spirit has duplicated in such a short amount of time, that it's difficult to measure the exponential growth and impact our world will experience because of his choice. There is no longer such a thing as an insignificant moment for us. We are part of a story that is unfolding-weaving destinies in and out of lives faster than the latest smartphone technology, and there is no sign of the momentum slowing – that is if we decide to do our part.

Helen Keller said, "I would rather be physically blind and have no sight, than to have sight and no vision." Everyone one of us are involved in this story no matter how seemingly invisible our mark may appear, and we have to recognize that our part is intrinsic to the survival of the scene. Without new dancers our movement will slow down dramatically. Workshop numbers will stagnate or deflate, teachers will stand in the square of an empty room, instead of a circle of students, and musicians will play for themselves unable to share the spirit with accompanying dancers. We cannot let this happen.

Everyday we wake up and go about our daily routine in life. We dress how we want to be addressed, leave our homes and begin to interact with other people throughout the day. Have you ever thought that many of the people you see in passing are looking for what you have to offer? You may only plant a small idea in the minds of a person, while others may cultivate it, but ultimately that new person will find their unique place in our community. I believe Frankie set a precedent that can and will be met. He didn't let age stop him, language or color differences, nor did he choose to just memorialize his past. He chose to share the spirit of this movement with the world. His example is our call to action. The future is waiting on us. Will we rise to the occasion?



# COMPETITIONS Vs. SOCIAL DANCING:

*Nick Williams*

Competition and social dance have had a complicated history when it comes to partner dancing. The Lindy Hop, birthed on the dance floors of Harlem during the Great Depression, was a joyous celebration of life, and the Lindy scene has always prided itself on being a street dance based in improvisation and social interaction. It has always fought becoming a codified dance like Ballroom.

Naturally, dancers have always wanted to show off their skills, a desire that lends itself to performance opportunities like competitions and jam circles. However, Lindy Hop exists in a very different society today than it did back in the 1930s and '40s, especially when it comes to the influence of competitions on the dance. What changes have those 80 years or so of competitions brought to the dance, and what has stayed the same?

Fortune and glory: the fantasy that most aspiring competitors hope to achieve. Both then and now, competitions have lured dancers in with promises of prize money and bragging rights. However, what can be achieved from winning competitions has changed. In the 1930s and '40s, dancers could sometimes get performance gigs as a prize for winning a competition, or competitions could gain them entrance into the top echelon of Lindy Hoppers who performed in troupes such as Whitey's Lindy Hoppers. Performing meant a more consistent source of income compared to winning a one-time prize at a competition. It also meant that dancers might have the opportunity to perform Lindy Hop in Hollywood films or to travel around the world. Unfortunately, it didn't last for most dancers. Big Band music declined with the start of World War II, and with that, the number of performance gigs dwindled. Only a few dancers stayed in the entertainment industry. The rest took other jobs, started families, and either left dancing behind or kept it as a hobby they revisited on occasion.

Today, competitions still give the dancers who win them opportunities to earn a living, but teaching, rather than performing, has become the business of professional dancers. Scenes around the world host workshops and classes where the teachers headline the events. Many of our top professionals make a living at traveling around the world to these workshops. Other professional dancers start local businesses where they teach classes or even found dance studios. Competitions create a forum to make a name for yourself, to rise up in the eyes of promoters or other dancers, or for current professionals to remain relevant.

Today's business of workshops allows professional dancers to create a sustainable career – some have been doing it for more than 30 years. That means competitions have become all the more important to the modern Lindy Hop scene as a way for dancers to make a living.

Maintaining the integrity of Lindy Hop as an improvisational social dance is always a concern when the topic of competitions arises. Both then and now, competitions have been a way to push the dance. They create an atmosphere for dancers to create, explore, and potentially evolve the dance. The first airstep was introduced to Lindy Hop because Frankie Manning had to go head-to-head in a team competition against his idol "Shorty" George Snowden, and his innovation forever changed the face of Lindy Hop. Those that observe the competitions are influenced by what they see. The music they hear in the competitions influences what becomes trendy to dance to or reflects what is already popular. Social dancers can get exposed to new moves, variations, and inspirations.

Likewise, dancers in competitions both then and now have also run the risk of losing the social part of social dancing in favor of the performance part. Contestants start to emphasize winning over the audience and judges rather than presenting the best dancing. Flash, choreography, and tricks become a way to get attention and oftentimes win competitions. Because competitions emphasize an outward versus an inward presentation (as opposed to social dancing, where the focus is on you, your partner, and the music), the feeling, connection, and finesse of dancing begin to seem less important. Even back in the original era of Lindy Hop, "Shorty" Snowden once complained in an interview about the lack of footwork he saw in Lindy Hop. Some of the same complaints are made today by dancers who have been around for a while.

The biggest difference today is that social media and YouTube have amplified the impact that competitions have on social dancing. In Lindy Hop's heyday for the most part you had to be there in person to see dancers perform, and that might be in jam circles, cats' corners, or competitions. Even movies with dancing in them would only be available to watch while they were in theaters. Now, we can obsessively watch performance footage, which largely consists of these contests, over and over again on the internet. Many videos are now uploaded the same night the contest happened. Very little social dance footage is on

# THEN AND NOW

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YouTube in comparison to competition footage. This can cause dancers to overemphasize the importance of the aesthetic and content choices they see in the contests in their social dancing, which can create flash-based dancing, flash over substance.

At a glance, Lindy Hop might seem to be in a good place today. People are still having fun, they get inspired, there are many talented dancers, and the quality of dancing is better than it was 20 years ago. So what's the problem? Context. These competitions are being taken out of context today, just like when dancers in the 1980s tried to turn the fast-and-furious performance of the Whitey's Lindy Hoppers in Hellzapoppin' into their social dancing. It would be that same mistake for social dancers today to treat competitions and performances as the "essence of Lindy Hop." What you see the professional dancers present in these competitions cannot fully convey their values for dancing, as they are just a very small part of a whole...and usually an exaggerated part at that. Those who try to copy these performances end up being caricatures of the original artist. It's gotten to the point where one "exciting" part of a routine can change social dancers' entire way of moving their bodies worldwide. Partnering and connection will continue to suffer if contests are their primary influence.

Competitions are not a physical entity on which we can place blame. Nor are we in dire straits and needful of extreme change. Rather, there are things that all members of the Lindy Hop community can do to mitigate the negative impact of competitions on social dancing.

Here are some things social dancers and audience members can do:

- *Listen to the instructors' values and philosophies in class to help understand why they choose to dance the way they do.*
- *Watch your favorite dancers social dance. It will allow you to compare and contrast this dancing with their competition dancing, giving you better perspective and context.*
- *Post more social dancing footage on YouTube (with the dancers' permission, of course).*
- *Social dance with these same people to understand their feel/connection, movement, and musicality (an aspect that cannot be fully comprehended visually).*

- *When watching a competition live, think about what you value and cheer for that, and not just go along with others going crazy for the sake of being crazy. Maybe it's a beautiful swing-out you want to cheer for. And if that flashy move is awesome, by all means shout for it. Every audience member has a voice.*

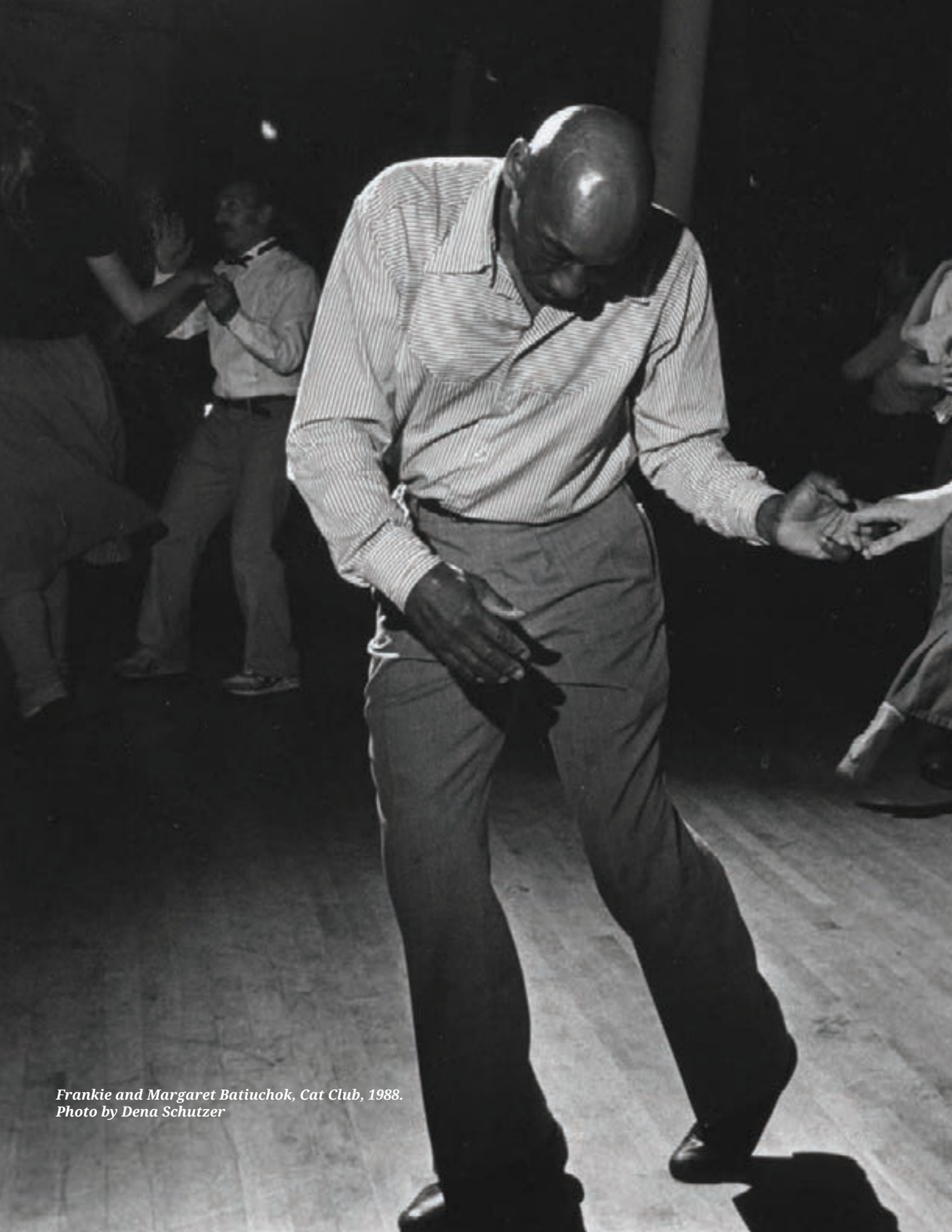
Those who are competing also can play a role:

- *Understand what your values are as a dancer and what you want to convey to the audience. Maybe you want to show you can do both flash and finesse, or improvisation as well as choreography.*
- *Keep in mind that what you present is representing your identity and values as a dancer as well as what Lindy Hop is to you.*

Event organizers/promoters and contest judges have a responsibility as well:

- *Design contests that clearly outline your values and what you'd like to see from the dancers. It may be social dance and improvisational skills you wish to reward, or perhaps a simple throw-down contest. The contest format, music style, and tempo are all part of this design.*
- *Hire judges who will uphold the values of the contest and clearly communicate these values to both the judges and the competitors.*
- *Judges, make decisions not on the emotional impact of the audience but rather on the values you hold in highest regard as well as the vision of the promoter.*

These simple actions, and everyone taking responsibility for them, will ensure a bright future for Lindy Hop. Its long tradition of social dancing and partnering skills will endure. Context and a proper balance of dynamics are vastly important now more than ever. Contests will continue to thrive, inspire, and push Lindy Hop, but it's our responsibility to protect social dancing and uphold the standards and values that make it the art form it is and has been for many generations.



*Frankie and Margaret Batiuchok, Cat Club, 1988.  
Photo by Dena Schutzer*





# WELCOME TO FRANKIE'S CORNER

This is a special advertising section that a few of the Lindy Hop scenes around the world contributed to as a way to help sponsor the publication of this book. These folks also hosted Frankie, some of them many times over the years. We are very grateful for their contributions, all of them!



In April 1997, the Houston Swing Dance Society was born with a Frankie Manning Workshop. The Frankie Workshop later morphed into the Lindyfest. Lindyfest was Frankie's last workshop in 2009. He led the Shim Sham from his wheelchair. We'll never forget. Love you, Frankie, now and forever. Years Visited: annually from 1997 – 2009

Photo by Holly Kuper



HOUSTON SWING DANCE SOCIETY

With the Frankie Manning Ambassador "Adamas" as the president, Swing It Co., Ltd. is the only professional organization in Korea - an entertainment company based on swing dance. It organizes various dance events including the biggest event in Asia, Camp Swing It, which started with the aim of bringing Frankie Manning to Korea. Currently, Swing It tries to inherit the spirit of Frankie and spread Lindy Hop all over Korea. It is aiming for the growth of regional scenes by opening up venues in cities outside of Seoul. Moreover, the organization actively shares its expertise with other scenes in Asia.



the spirit of Frankie and spread Lindy Hop all over Korea. It is aiming for the growth of regional scenes by opening up venues in cities outside of Seoul. Moreover, the organization actively shares its expertise with other scenes in Asia.

Frankie has been an honoured guest in Singapore over 8 times since 1998 and we are always grateful for what he shared so generously with us.

Happy 100 Frankie, wanna dance?

With love from,  
Jitterbugs Singapore



**FRANKIE MANNING 100 YEARS**  
- From Sweden with love  
**THE RHYTHM HOT SHOTS**

Catrine Ljunggren

Eva Lagerqvist

Ulrika Ericsson

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Lennart Westerlund

Hop to the Beat - Uptown Swing Dance - Beantown Camp

18<sup>th</sup> year, a tribute & celebration of Frankie Manning!

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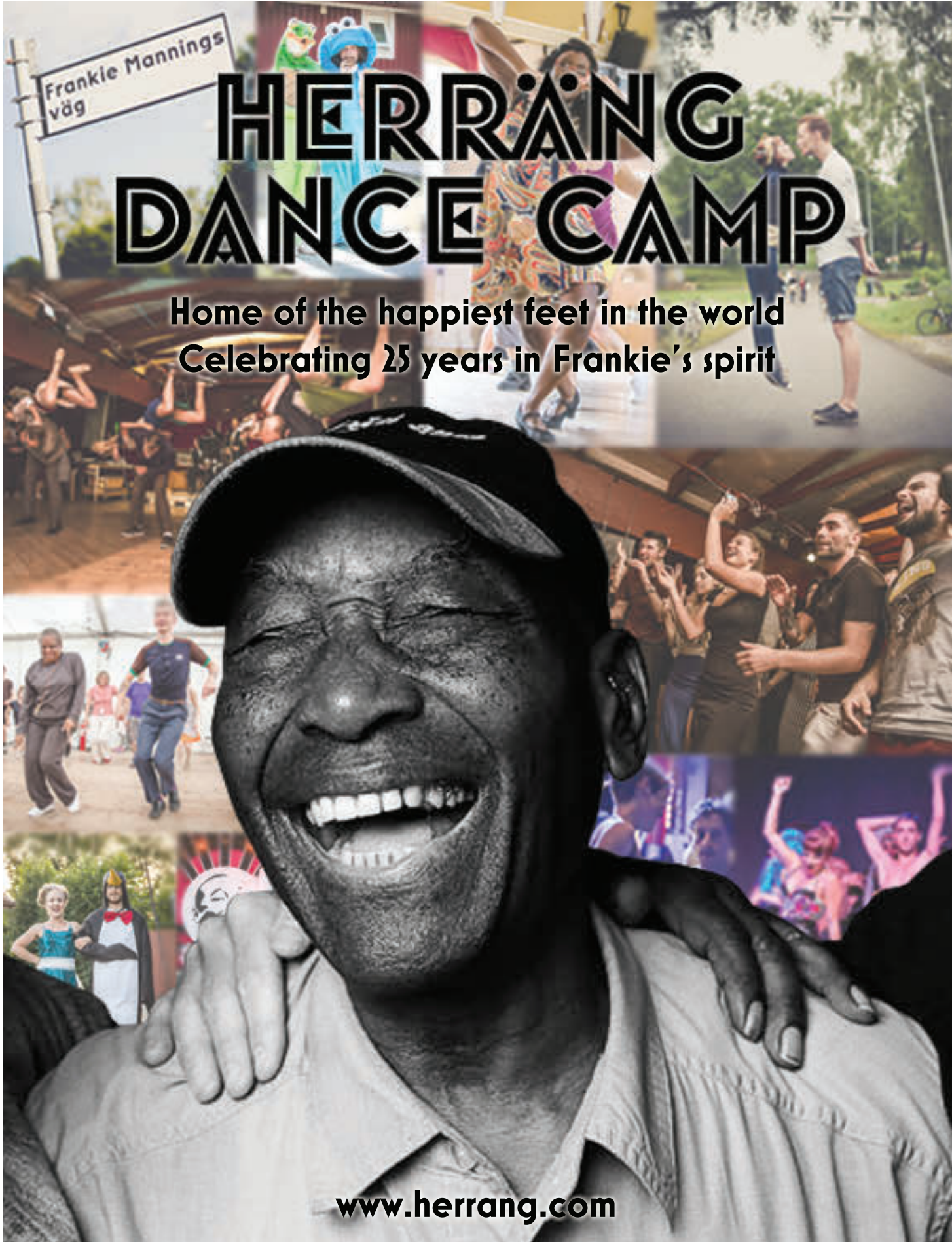
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**HOP TO THE BEAT**





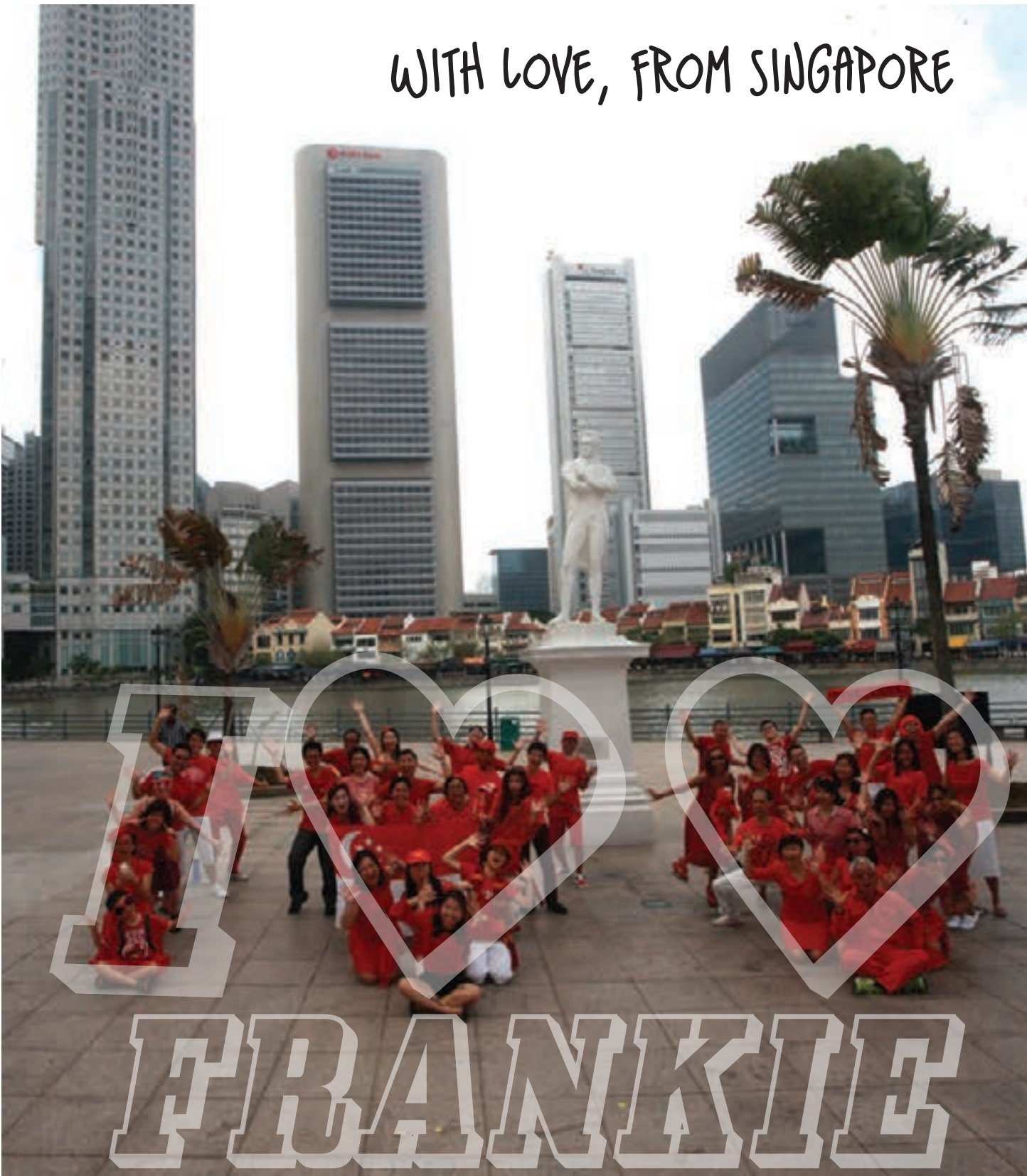
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# I ♥ FRANKIE



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DUANE REGINALD ANG ELIZABETH CHOONG EMILY WONG

ERIC TACHIBANA EUNICE OON FAIZHAL BIN BAKER

LEONARD OW LIM LI ASHIEU LIU MEI XI MARZ

JOHAR PECK PAMELA THAM PAULINE LEONG

PENELOPE SIRAJ PEPPER SEE POH BEE LING

SHENG YUAN HAI SINCLAIR ANG SING LIM



HENG JING YI JACELYN CHAN

JANICE LIONG JESSICA HURST



TAN HONG WEE TAN SEOK HUI TAU FAN ROSLI

THOW XIN QIANG WU YI HENG YAP SHE FONG

YUAN BO YA YUAN ZHANG SHAN YUN HEE



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*With Ewa Staremo Burak in front of Roseland Ballroom, NYC during his 85th birthday party. Photo by Brian McGill*

# SWINGO

## THE ORIGINAL SOCIAL DANCE GAME™

*from eWa Burak*

*One of the beautiful things about the Lindy scene is that it is so diverse, with people from all over the world – young and old – connecting with each other and the music on the dance floor. SWINGO helps to build even more connections in a playful way.*

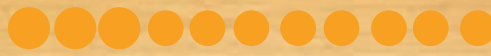
*In 2013, I visited Lucy Falkner and Rhythm City Productions in Vancouver. There, I met Aaron Mal-kin who created SWINGO for one of the dances to encourage people to try something different on the dance floor with someone with whom they've never danced before. We all had a great time playing, dancing and making new connections.*

*Frankie reminded us again and again to really enjoy those three minutes we share with a partner on the floor. Short, special and sweet. SWINGO is designed to enhance those three minutes – give it a try!*

*Thanks Aaron for sharing your game!  
Directions on the back!  
eWa burak*

*To enjoy, dance and play here at Frankie100,  
and to bring home to your local dance floor!*





# SWINGO

THE ORIGINAL SOCIAL DANCE GAME™



Dance with someone you have never danced with before

Dance with someone from another country

Dance with a weekend volunteer

Dance with someone who has 10 or more years of swing experience

Do 20 swing-outs consecutively in a dance

Lead a dance

Follow a dance

Make up a new move and use it in a dance

Dance with someone at least 20 years older/younger

Solo dance a full song

Dance with a New Yorker

Dance with someone wearing interesting shoes

Dance with a beginner who's at a lindy event for the first time

Dance in "close hold position" for an entire song.

Give a positive comment to your partner after a dance

Share a favorite "Frankie move/story or experience" after a dance





## HOW TO PLAY

1. A "game organizer" hands out SWINGO cards and announce if the participating dancers are to complete one line, two lines, or a full card to win.
2. If you are playing for a full card, dancers may complete multiple squares in each dance/song.
3. After each dance you ask your partner to put his/her signature on the line for that particular dance.
4. The first person to complete a line/lines/whole card yells "SWINGO!" loud enough for the "game organizer" to hear it wins!



# MUSCLEHEAD

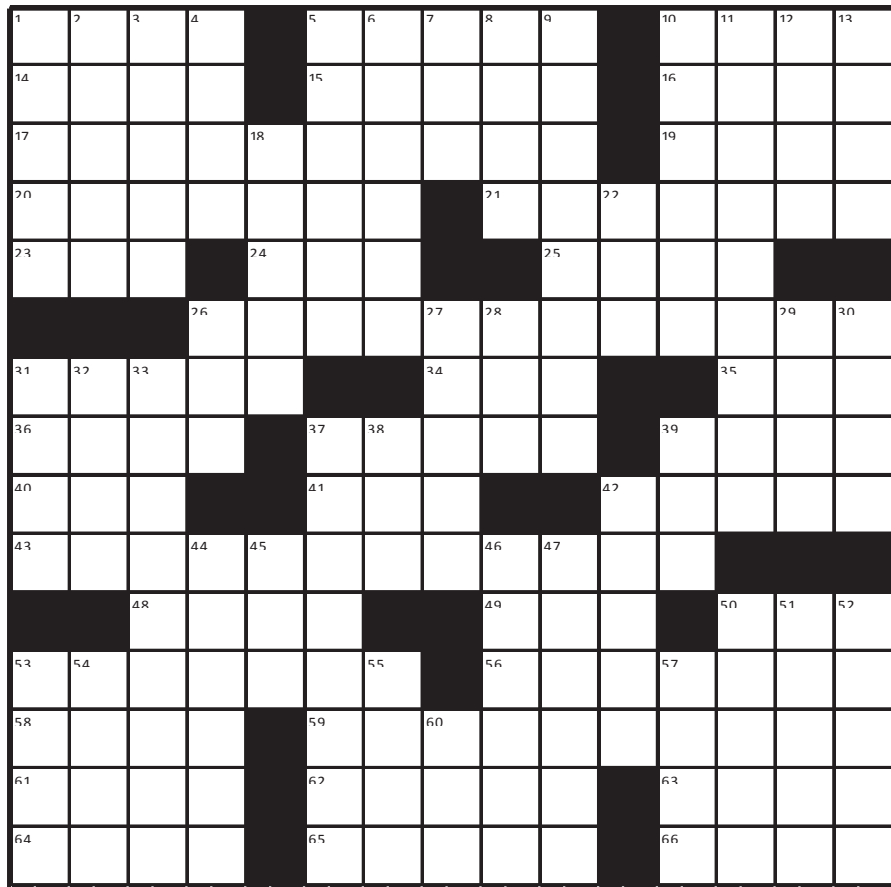
by Rodney Seaforth

Hint:

$\{(*-), (**-**-**), (*-*) \in (***)\}$

## ACROSS

- 1 Fistfuls of dollars
- 5 Helmsley or Lewis
- 10 Press agent
- 14 Curved molding
- 15 Up
- 16 Snow field
- 17 Consumer choice method, often
- 19 Become a partner in crime
- 20 “\_\_\_\_\_ and Johnny” (Pacino film) \*
- 21 Dennis and Hedda \*\*
- 23 Place for a stud...or two
- 24 QB mishap
- 25 Cuban Castro
- 26 Conflict colors \*\*\*
- 31 Law-abiding gas type
- 34 Chicago to Toronto dir.
- 35 Bar rocks
- 36 Tools for Ringo
- 37 “Lucky \_\_\_\_\_” (Time Man of the Year, 1927) \*\*
- 39 Die toss
- 40 PC part
- 41 Medium skill, initially
- 42 Carvey and Delany
- 43 Olsen and Johnson musical \*\*\*
- 48 Permeate
- 49 Like Methuselah
- 50 Rap sheet letters
- 53 Ford and Herzog \*\*
- 56 Headhunter specialty \*
- 58 “Famous” baker
- 59 “True” microorganisms without a nucleus
- 61 “The \_\_\_\_\_ Show”
- 62 Taken for \_\_\_\_\_
- 63 Shuttle thread
- 64 Exxon, in Toronto



© Rodney Seaforth 2014

- 65 Formalities
- 66 Branch location

## DOWN

- 1 Stout detective
- 2 Ancient marketplace
- 3 Scotch man
- 4 Preferred child status?
- 5 Longoria or Lopez
- 6 “And so on, and so on”, briefly
- 7 Craigslist abbreviation
- 8 “Teach Your Children” artist
- 9 Practicing professional
- 10 Where one can find Andy Capp
- 11 Mutiny
- 12 Where not to go on “The Price is Right”
- 13 Brooklyn bunch
- 18 Talent
- 22 Stationery unit
- 26 Type of relief

- 27 Martial art
- 28 Supplement
- 29 Bruin org.
- 30 Lampreys and morays
- 31 Yearning
- 32 Oaf
- 33 Butter and mayonnaise
- 37 Calendar correction
- 38 AT&T or Comcast (abbr.)
- 39 Led
- 42 Neglected to
- 44 Song title from The Cars and Wang Chung
- 45 Tappan-\_\_\_\_ Bridge
- 46 Pompadour product
- 47 Set cry
- 50 TV station
- 51 “Clue” tool
- 52 Marble material
- 53 Its often quoted per hour
- 54 Grps. with plans
- 55 Little Cruise
- 57 Salamander
- 60 Boring thing



# THE FRANKIE MANNING FOUNDATION

*Mandi Gould*

## BACKGROUND

The idea for the Frankie Manning Foundation came about during the early planning stages of Frankie Manning's 95th Birthday Festival, when Frankie was still alive. Organizers Buddy Steves, David Jacoby, Tena Morales, and Elliott Donnelley decided that the Festival would be a non-profit, and an all-volunteer endeavor.

The vision for Frankie 95 was to bring the global Lindy hop community together in order to celebrate Frankie's life and birthday, and to help promote and bring attention to the music and dance Frankie loved.

The team decided that any revenue generated by the Festival in excess of expenses would go to a dedicated fund that would be directed by Frankie for the purposes of promoting Lindy Hop around the world. The intention was to honor him with the announcement of the new fund on his 95th birthday.

Frankie learned of and endorsed the plan to establish the fund before he died, and he appointed Judy Pritchett, his long-time companion, and Chazz Young, his eldest son, to represent him in matters relating to the fund.

After Frankie 95, all revenues in excess of expenses went to form the Frankie Manning Foundation. For now, the fund is housed within the Houston Swing Dance Society, a 501(c)(3) non-profit public charity.

The Foundation is directed by an independent advisory board that currently consists of: Chazz Young, Judy Pritchett, Cynthia Millman (Frankie's co-author), Buddy Steves, Elliott Donnelley, and Mandi Gould (Overall Producer, Frankie 100).

## FRANKIE MANNING FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

Up to his last days, Frankie poured his considerable talent, charm and energy into his personal mission of spreading Lindy Hop around the world. In particular, Frankie always wished that there could be more of an interest in Lindy Hop among young African-Americans. The Frankie Manning Foundation could find no better tribute to Frankie than to continue his work building the Lindy Hop community. To this end we have offered several scholarships and incentives to dancers to study the Lindy Hop, its history, and Frankie's story, so that they may pass it on to others.

In collaboration with the Herräng Dance Camp and Beantown Camp, we have been able to provide full scholarships, including accommodation and transportation, to 19 individuals since 2011. In addition, we have made an annual grant to support the youth program of the International Lindy Hop Championships (ILHC). With your generous donations, we are able to provide scholarships for 20 dancers to attend the Frankie 100 celebration in New York City. We have also provided small grants for transportation and classes to a number of individuals and facilities. This year, Swingout New Hampshire will join the scholarship program, along with Camp Jitterbug in 2015, and we hope to add other high-quality dance camps in the future.

Other future plans include enabling teachers to have residencies in geographic areas where there is an interest in Lindy Hop.

Every time we see a picture of Frankie smiling, we choose to think he is pleased that his work is being carried on.

## ADDITIONAL FOUNDATION PROJECTS

Other Foundation projects have included:

- *The purchase and installation of Frankie's headstone at Woodlawn Cemetery (see photo page 97) and maintenance of the gravesite.*
- *Promoting public awareness of Frankie through grants to independent documentary films.*
- *Spearheading the annual global birthday celebrations and advocating for World Lindy Hop Day on Frankie's birthday, May 26th.*

## SHARING FRANKIE'S HISTORY

A prime goal of the Foundation is to educate people about Frankie's life and work. We hope to:

1. Fulfill Frankie's wish of having his memorabilia housed in a library where it is easily accessible.
2. Create an archive of all video materials connected with Frankie.
3. Share Frankie's life and artistic heritage by supporting those who are working to pass on his legacy.

If you are interested in helping to achieve these goals, please contact us at [info@FrankieManningFoundation.org](mailto:info@FrankieManningFoundation.org)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

And for those who'd like to learn more about Frankie, we recommend:

- **Frankie Manning, Ambassador of Lindy Hop** by Frankie Manning and Cynthia Millman.
- *Historic and recent films of Frankie's choreography and performances, photographic images, and biographical information, available online and in public archives.*
- *Frankie's own instructional DVD series, partnering with Erin Stevens.*
- *An extensive oral history interview with Frankie, conducted by Bob Crease in 1992, and housed at the Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. A written transcript is available for review.*

1	W	A	D	S		5	L	E	O	N	A		10	I	R	O	N	
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17	L	O	W	E	S	18	T	C	O	S	T		19	A	B	E	T	
20	F	R	A	N	K	I	E		21	H	O	P	P	E	R	S		
23	E	A	R		24	I	N	T		25	R	A	U	L				
					26	B	L	A	C	K	A	N	D	B	L	U	E	
31	I	D	E	A	L				34	E	N	E			35	I	C	E
36	T	O	M	S		37	L	I	N	D	Y			39	R	O	L	L
40	C	P	U			41	E	S	P				42	D	A	N	A	S
43	H	E	L	L	Z	A	P	O	P	I	N							
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53	W	H	I	T	E	Y	S			56	M	A	N	N	I	N	G	
58	A	M	O	S		59	E	U	B	A	C	T	E	R	I	A		
61	G	O	N	G		62	A	R	I	D	E		63	W	E	F	T	
64	E	S	S	O		65	R	I	T	E	S		66	T	R	E	E	



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*"Swing Camp Catalina" (the closing party at Descanso Beach)  
with Frankie leading the Shim Sham, 1996  
Photo by Brian McGill*

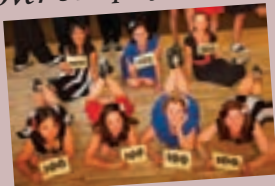


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*Frankie Manning*

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  - Begin the Beguine • Artie Shaw
  - Honey • Louis Armstrong & His Orchestra
  - Let's Get Together • Duke Ellington & His Orchestra
  - Laxdale Jr. • Duke Ellington & His Orchestra
  - Sings • Duke Ellington & His Orchestra
  - Part II • Duke Ellington & His Orchestra
  - In the Mood • Glenn Miller & His Orchestra
  - Toppin' In • Glenn Miller & His Orchestra
  - Flying Home • Lionel Hampton & His Orchestra
  - Take the "A" Train • Duke Ellington & His Septet
  - One O'clock Jump • Count Basie
  - Corner Pocket • Duke Ellington & His Orchestra

# Frankie Manning

May 26, 1914 - April 27, 2009



# FRANKIE'S FUNERAL

# & REPAST

*Photos by Ralph Gabriner*











## FRANKIE'S GRAVE IN WOODLAWN CEMETERY

**Judy Pritchett**

*with contribution by Lana Turner*

In Frankie Manning's lifetime, no matter what tribute was made to him, he always wanted to make sure that everybody had a good time. And so it is with his final resting place. In the beautiful surroundings of Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, New York City, a visit to Frankie's grave provides the opportunity to also mingle with those of some of the great artists of jazz and dance, like Duke Ellington, Harold Nicholas, Miles Davis, Celia Cruz, Vernon and Irene Castle, Lionel Hampton, Joe King Oliver and many, many others.

The dedication and unveiling of the Frankie Manning Memorial was held on Sunday, May 30, 2010 at Woodlawn Cemetery, with the Reverend Dr. Thomas P. Grissom, Jr. as Officiant.

Wycliffe Gordon – one of the foremost jazz musicians of our time and a true favorite of the swing community – performed a music tribute. A second music tribute, *Come Sunday* by Duke Ellington, was performed by Queen Esther and The Hot Five. Tributes to Frankie were given by Erin Stevens, Judy Pritchett, Buddy Steves, Chazz Young, Cynthia Millman, and Ryan Francois.

Unveiling the Frankie Manning Memorial was Mickey Davidson, Rik Panganiban, Larry Schultz, and Ryan Swift. Lana Turner produced the event.

Frankie's beautiful headstone, by master stone artisan Leon Rader, was provided through generous donations to the Frankie Manning Foundation by close friends, family and associates. During the celebrations surrounding Frankie's burial and the unveiling of his headstone, we had the privilege of dancing to live music near his grave.

## DIRECTIONS

### GRAVESITE:

Take the #4 subway train  
(Lexington Avenue Express or Local) to the end of the line,  
which is Woodlawn Station.

At the base of the station walk about ½ block  
the Jerome Avenue entrance is on the right.

Or take the #2 or #5 train to 233rd Street Station. Walk 3  
blocks along 233rd, downhill.

Crossover Webster Avenue,  
the Cemetery entrance is on the left.

For more information and additional directions, go to:  
[www.savoystyle.com/manningwoodlawn.html](http://www.savoystyle.com/manningwoodlawn.html)

### THE SAVOY BALLROOM SITE & PLAQUE IN HARLEM:

#### from downtown:

Take the #2 or #3 subway line and get off at 135th St.

Or take the M7 or M102 bus,

both of which run on Lenox Avenue,

M7 from the West Side and M102 from the East Side;

another option is the M1 bus that goes up Madison  
Avenue, turning onto Lenox through 139th Street.

Walk uptown (north) on Lenox Avenue.

The monument is between 140th and 141st Streets.



Top left: from left, Lana Turner, Reverend Dr. Thomas P. Grissom, Jr., Elliott Donnelly, Chazz Young, Ryan Francois, Judy Pritchett, Cynthia Millman, Wycliff Gordon, Erin Stevens (kneeling). Photo credit Lynn Redmile 2010

Above: Frankie and Norma at the Savoy Ballroom site & plaque  
Facing page: This photo of Frankie's gravestone is courtesy of Lynn Redmile



AMBASSADOR  
OF THE  
LINDY HOP

# FRANKIE MANNING

MAY 26, 1914  
APRIL 27, 2009

HE DEVOTED HIS LIFE  
TO FAMILY, FRIENDS  
AND SWING DANCERS  
ALL OVER THE WORLD







**A PERFORMER FOR MOST OF HIS LIFE**, Frankie Manning (1914-2009) infected many thousands of dancers around the world with his joy and love of Lindy Hop, and the swing music to which it is danced. This Commemorative Book, in honor of what would have been his 100th birthday, is our way of giving back to a man we all loved, and ensuring his legacy lives on. We hope as you read this book, look at the pictures, even see the ads which supported its publication, you come to sense some of what those of us privileged to know him experienced in his presence. If so, as Frankie would have said,

**AH ONE, AND AH TWO, YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO...**

Share it!

[www.frankiemanningfoundation.org](http://www.frankiemanningfoundation.org)