



On Pointe



Dance History Unit Studies

Bill "Bojangles" Robinson was an early 20th century Broadway and film performer who revolutionized tap dance with his up-on-his-toes tapping. When metal taps came into vogue in the 1920s, he continued to use split-clog wooden taps.

He made four films with Shirley Temple. The film *Stormy Weather*, loosely based on his life, featured many top African-American performers. Bill Robinson was one of the first African-American performers to perform without blackface, to perform solo (breaking the "two man" rule which prohibited African Americans from dancing solo), and to star in a mixed-race production.

On Pointe, the CSD Dance History Unit Studies is a regular feature of the Claire School of Dance curriculum, providing students and parents the context for the appreciation of dance in all its forms.



Classroom Activities

- rhythm games
- *Rap a tap tap* (book)
- Examine a tap shoe

You can see Bill "Bojangles" Robinson perform his famous staircase dance here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtHvetGnOdM>

You can see a short bio pic here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-DauwDv8HM>

To do at home:

* Tape pennies or tie a washer to the bottom of your child's shoes for DIY tap shoes.

* For a tap shoe coloring page, go here <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/28780885094395950/>.

*Make your own paper tap shoe (see illustration).

