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HINES-SIGHT: AN ANALYSIS OF GREGORY HINES'S TAP DANCE CAREER THROUGH NEWS  
MEDIA COVERAGE

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of Fine and Performing Arts Honors Program

By

Kate Trabalka

The Honors College

Fine and Performing Arts Program

East Tennessee State University

*Kate Trabalka* 4/15/21

Kate Trabalka, Student/Date

*Cara Harker* 4/14/21

Cara Harker, Faculty Mentor/Date

*Mildred Perreault* 4/15/21

Dr. Mildred Perreault, Faculty Reader/Date

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## *I. Introduction*

“Hines-sight: An Analysis of Gregory Hines’s Tap Dance Career Through News Media Coverage” evaluates the legacy and artistic impact of tap dancer Gregory Hines within the world of tap dance and in the public eye. My experiences as a media and communication major with a journalism concentration, a dance minor, and a Fine and Performing Arts Honors scholar at East Tennessee State University from 2017-2021 culminated with my undergraduate honors thesis. The following research of news media coverage of Hines’s tap dance career, as well as analysis of his performances and creative exploration into his tap dance style prepared me to create, execute, and film a tap performance inspired by Hines, which was filmed in March 2021. This thesis is split up into three sections: background on the history of tap dance and Gregory Hines’s life, research and analysis of news media coverage of Hines’s tap dance career, and personal creative exploration and reflection by the researcher. Analyzing Hines’s legacy both through journalism research and my own artistic expression as a dancer provided a better appreciation of the artistic field of tap dance, and specifically of Hines’s work and legacy. It also informed how I approached the intimidating prospect of creating a performance intended to accurately represent his style and legacy. Both in theory and in practice, I explored the style and impact of Hines’s tap dancing, and this thesis serves as a record of my journey.

## *II. Background*

### **Tap Dance**

The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines tap dance as, “a step dance tapped out audibly by means of shoes with hard soles or soles and heels to which taps have been added” (“Tap dance,” n.d.). While this definition is truthful in essence, tap dancers, choreographers, and

teachers would argue that there is much more to tap dance than just that. In *The Book of Tap: Recovering America's Long Lost Dance*, Jack Stanly, one of the nation's leading tap instructors, is quoted saying, "It's very important that people be made aware that it's not just putting taps on your shoes. Tap is a certain form of dancing in which rhythm is the basic ingredient. Rhythm and sound added to movement is an addition over what other dancing does ...," (Ames & Siegelman, 1977, p. 20). The placement of metal plates on the bottom of a dancer's shoes and the use of those plates to make sounds are key differentiators between tap and other styles of dance. However, tap is about is more than just using shoes to create sounds. It is also about the rhythms a dancer creates through those sounds. Tap dancers utilize the ball, toe, and heel of their shoes to create different sounds, movements, and rhythms. Tap dancers can choreograph movements and rhythms based off the beat and tempo of a piece of music, but they can also produce their own music through the rhythms they create with their feet.

The history of American tap dancing can be traced back to its European and African roots, with origins in Irish step dancing or the Irish Jig, British clog dancing, and the rhythms of African tribal music and dance (Ames & Siegelman, 1977). These various cultural influences came together at the start of the slave trade, as slaves and European crewman would perform their native dances on the decks of slave ships. Later on, the Slave Act of 1840 prohibited slaves from using musical instruments that could produce a warning signal, leading them to use foot beats and handclaps for enjoyment instead. It was on American plantations where African rhythms mixed with European dances, and slaves began to adopt stylistic elements of the Irish jig, such as stiff bodies and flying feet. Tap dancing continued to develop through the popularity of minstrel shows, in which white performers would observe and steal the movements, mannerisms, and songs of slaves while performing in blackface. Also in the 1840s, newly freed

slaves congregated with Irish immigrants in Five Points district in New York City, trading dance moves in brothels and saloons. It was here that Master Juba, a free-born negro, created the dance challenge, in which dancers challenged each other with their moves. Juba went on to become successful among white performers in minstrelsy. In 1847, a wave of German immigrants brought more folk dances for collaboration, which led to the creation of the German-Irish waltz clog.

As minstrel shows began to die off, tap dancing transitioned into the world of vaudeville, in which Black and white performers were still separated. Throughout the vaudeville era, the vocabulary of tap continued to develop, specifically through the innovative rhythms and personality of Black vaudevillians. Black vaudeville performers continued to gain fame, and the era produced stars like Bill Bojangles Robinson, who later went on to perform on Broadway and in Hollywood. In the 1920s, Broadway revues and chorus lines represented tap as a first-class showcase, and musical comedies allowed dance to be incorporated into shows with storylines. From the 1920s through the 1940s, American tap dancing continued to evolve as tap dancers exchanged different tap steps and styles, holding dance challenges at the Hoofers Club in Harlem, New York. Both Black and white tappers partook in this exchange. The 1940s brought tap dancing into the Golden Age of Hollywood, producing stars like Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly, Ginger Rogers, the Nicholas Brothers and more. In the 1950s, tap dancing declined in popularity both in Hollywood and on Broadway due to the introduction of commercial television, combined with the decline of movie musicals and the prioritization of other dance styles like jazz, modern, and ballet.

Tap re-emerged in the 1960s through individual tap performers and troupes, as well as through the show *Tap Happening*, which reintroduced the dance challenge tradition. In the

1970s, tap dancing returned to the Broadway stage. It also returned to television and film through *That's Entertainment*, which re-shared the tap dancing of the Golden Age with audiences. From the 1980s through the early 2000s, tap continued to appear on Broadway and in film, as tap dancers like Gregory Hines made efforts to showcase tap to the public and helped transition the art-form over to the new generation of tap dancers like Savion Glover (Ames & Siegelman, 1977). Tap continues to live on in modern day on Broadway, through dance television series like *So You Think You Can Dance*, and through social media.

Different styles of tap dancing have evolved throughout history with each new generation of dancers, music, and other artistic influences. Some of the major styles of tap dance include soft-shoe, buck and wing, classical tap, class acts, jazz tap, musical or Broadway tap, hoofing, rhythm tap, and funk tap (Lewis, 2013). Soft-shoe tap is performed in soft-soled shoes without metal taps. It is more light and graceful, utilizing a smooth and relaxed rhythm. This type of tap was often performed in Vaudeville acts. Buck-and-wing tap is flashier than soft-shoe. It is a combination of the Irish and British clog and African rhythm, and it utilizes fast footwork and kicks, highlighting movement below the waist. Classical tap, also known as flash or swing tap, is a combination of tap, ballet, jazz dance, and acrobatics. This style contains percussive footwork, syncopated rhythms, as well as upper-body movement, exaggerated leg movements, and acrobatic tricks. The Nicholas Brothers were known for this style. Class acts were more refined than classical tap, and they did not utilize gymnastics or acrobatic tricks in their performances. The style is high-speed and close to the floor, incorporating soft-shoe style elements, as well as dance challenges with percussive, intricate movements alongside a drummer. Tap dancers like Honi Coles and Cholly Atkins were known as class acts. Jazz Tap was formed through the emergence of ragtime music and the jazz age around the 1920s. This style is characterized by

upright bodies, as well as light, quick, and precise footwork, utilizing the syncopated jazz rhythms of swing or jazz bands. Jazz tap is also one of the fastest tap styles. Musical or Broadway tap is a mix of Hollywood and traditional forms of tap, with emphasis put on performance and body formations, and the style is exemplified in many Broadway musicals. Hoofing is a tap style characterized by dancing into the floor. Emphasis is put on stomps and stamps, as well as rhythm, percussion, music, and syncopation. Savion Glover is an example of a hooper. Funk tap, a newer style, utilizes a blend of hip hop and funk to create a more modern form of tap dance. Rhythm Tap utilizes grounded movements and percussive heel drops, with a focus on lower-body movement. The style holds more importance in the acoustics of the movement than its aesthetic qualities, and Gregory Hines was well-known for performing this style (Lewis, 2013).

### **Gregory Hines**

Gregory Hines held many titles throughout his lifetime – singer, actor, musician, artist – but first and foremost, he was a tap dancer. Hines was born on February 14, 1946, in Washington Heights in New York City (Hill, n.d.). His mother, Alma Hines, encouraged him and his older brother Maurice to start taking tap dance lessons with the hope of it helping the young boys escape poverty. Hines began dancing around three-years-old and was dancing professionally by five-years-old. The two brothers spent considerable time at the Apollo Theatre growing up, and for fifteen years they performed together in nightclubs across the country as The Hine Kids. They later became the Hines Brothers, and when Gregory Hines was eighteen years old, the brothers started performing with their father, Maurice Sr., who played the drums. Their group Hines, Hines and Dad, toured internationally and made appearances on *The Tonight Show* (Hill, n.d.).



Hines married Patricia Panella in 1968, and they had a daughter named Daria in 1970. Their marriage ended in divorce (Monaghan, 2003). Shortly after, Hines wanted to get away, leaving Hines, Hines and Dad in 1973 to go to Venice, California (Hill, n.d.). There, he took a break from the dance scene, and he began to delve into music. He formed a jazz-rock band called Severance, releasing an original album in 1973. He moved back to New York City in the late 1970s, in which he explored the theatre world, finding success with many Broadway shows through the 1990s. He performed in shows such as *Eubie!*, *Comin' Uptown*, and *Sophisticated Ladies*, as well as *Jelly's Last Jam*, for which he won the Tony Award for Best Actor in 1992 (Hill, n.d.).

From the early 1980s through the early 2000s, Hines embarked into the world the film and television. During this time, he was married a second time to Pamela Koslow, with whom he had a son named Zachary (Biography.com Editors, 2020). Their marriage also ended in divorce. Hines's film acting career started with his role as the sand-dancing slave Josephus in *History of the World, Part I* in 1981. He continued on to star in movies such as *Running Scared*, *Off Limits*, *The Preacher's Wife*, *Waiting to Exhale*, and *Mad Dog Time* (Gregory Hines, n.d.). He also starred in several films in which he portrayed a tap dancer including *The Cotton Club*, *White Nights*, and *Tap*. Director was another title he claimed, directing the independent feature, *Bleedings Hearts*, and the TV film *The Red Sneakers*, for which he was nominated for Daytime Emmy's as both a director and performer. Hines also ventured into television, starring in TV shows such as *The Gregory Hines Show*, and *Will and Grace* and TV movies such as *White Lie*, *The Cherokee Kid*, *The Color of Justice*, and *A Stranger in Town*. Hines was nominated for Primetime Emmys for his performances in the TV movie *Bojangles* and his PBS television special, *Gregory Hines: Tap Dance in America* (Gregory Hines, n.d.). He won a Daytime Emmy

in 1999 for voicing the character Big Bill in Bill Cosby's Nickelodeon animated series, *Little Bill* (American dance legends, n.d.).

Hines spent the last few years of his life with his fiancé, Negrita Jayde (Monaghan, 2003). He died from liver cancer on August 9, 2003, in Los Angeles while on the way to the hospital. He was fifty-seven years old. According to his son, Zachary, Hines lived thirteen months after his diagnosis, when doctors told him he would only live for two (Sisario, 2003).

Although Hines also claims many accolades in the singing and acting spheres, much of his life was still dedicated to tap dance. Hines was on the Board of Directors of Manhattan Tap, the Jazz Tap Ensemble, and the American Tap Foundation (Hill, n.d.). As an advocate for tap dance in America, he lobbied for the creation of National Tap Dance Day in 1988, a day that is now celebrated annually on May 25 in 40 U.S. cities and eight other countries (Hill, n.d.). He continued to choreograph, perform, teach up until his death. He also mentored young tap dancers like Dianne Walker, Ted Levy, Jane Goldberg, and most notably, Savion Glover.

### *III. News Media Coverage of Gregory Hines*

#### **Introduction/Literature Review**

Hines was a well-known figure in the entertainment and dance industries, and because of this, he was familiar with the press. Hines was often mentioned in, covered and interviewed for various news media pieces regarding his career in acting, singing, and especially tap dancing, as well as news about the art of tap dance itself. This coverage of him documented various aspects of his life and career as a tap dancer. It also provides additional insight on certain aspects of his career through the perspectives of critics, fellow tap artists, and himself. This documentation and

insight make news media coverage a viable method to analyze Hines's artistic impact and scope of influence within the world of tap dance and in the public eye.

### **Media Landscape**

From the late 1970s through the early 2000s, the time frame that Gregory Hines was primarily being interviewed for news coverage, the news media landscape was undergoing various changes due to technological advancements. From the 1960s through the 1970s, despite having to adapt to the changing media landscape amongst broadcast TV and radio, print media was still a durable, easily archived form of news (Lule, 2014). However, it was in the 1970s that microprocessors and random-access memory chips were invented, signaling the start of an eventual transition into the age of the Internet (Lule, 2014). In 1978, around the time Hines returned to the dance scene and started to be noticed by the press, the total estimated circulation of U.S. daily newspapers was 61,990,000, according to the Pew Research Center (Barthel, 2019). By the time of Hines's death in 2003, that number had dropped to 55,185,000 (Barthel, 2019). It was also around this time, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, that newspapers began to publish stories online, with the New York Times publishing online for the first time in 1996 (Lichterman, 2016).

Another changing element of the news media landscape during the time that Hines was covered by the press was the introduction of cable television (Lule, 2014). In the 1960s, radio and television were popular, with broadcast TV being the most dominant form of mass media. During the 1980s and 1990s, however, the rise of cable TV took place, allowing viewers a wider range of choices. Three major networks accounted for 93 percent of all television viewing in 1975, but by 2004, this share dropped to 28.4 percent of total viewing. Television was still dominated by the three large networks until the mid-1990s. Although the Telecommunications

Act of 1996 attempted to deregulate the industry, a few large corporations still remained in power of broadcast TV until the Federal Communications Commission loosened regulation more in 2003. It was then that a single company could own 45 percent of a single market, compared to 25 percent in 1982 (Lule, 2014).

### **News Values**

Journalists decide what to report on based off the newsworthiness of a subject, which is the degree to which that subject is, “interesting enough to the general public to warrant reporting,” (“Newsworthy,” n.d.). Newsworthiness can be evaluated through the presence of news values, which help decide which stories will be published. In 1965, Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge first theorized that a journalist’s decision to pursue certain news stories is influenced by news factors or news values. The set of 12 news factors they developed through their study included frequency, threshold, absolute intensity, intensity increase, unambiguity, meaningfulness, cultural proximity, relevance, consonance, predictability, demand, unexpectedness, unpredictability, scarcity, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite people, reference to persons, and reference to something negative (Galtung & Ruge, 1965).

Since then, various scholars and journalists have debated on a defined set of news values, altering and proposing new ones. According to David Conley’s and Stephen Lambie’s book, *The Daily Miracle: An Introduction to Journalism*, a study by the American Society of Newspaper Editors, “showed a lack of unanimity among journalists in defining ‘news.’ The study ‘showed’ a great deal of disagreement among news people about the nature of news and the way it should be handled,” (Hough, 1984, p. 7, as cited by Conley & Lambie, 2006, p. 82). Conley and Lambie later established a refined set of new value criteria that is widely accepted and taught in

journalism classrooms. Their eight-standard news-value criteria include impact, timeliness, prominence, proximity, the unusual, conflict, currency, and human interest (Conley & Lamble, 2006).

Impact involves the number of people whose lives will be influenced by the story in some way. Timeliness means that higher news value is given to recent events rather than events that took place further in the past. Prominence means that people in the public eye possess higher news value than unknown people. Proximity involves the location of events and situations within the stories, with events in a person's home community have higher news value than events that take place farther away. The unusual entails stories that involve bizarre or not-normal events or situations. Conflict involves situations that contain more strife are more newsworthy. Currency means stories pertaining to issues or topics in the spotlight of public concern contain higher news value (Curtis, 2013). Human interest is a broad news value often associated with soft news or feature stories, involving elements that do not encompass the other seven news values, but still interest humans and can inspire empathy, spark curiosity or arouse community concern. (Conley & Lamble, 2006)

The presence of these news values often determines what topics get covered or do not get covered by the press. For the events and topics that do get chosen by journalists to report on, news media coverage can serve as a type of historical record.

### **Journalism as History**

Journalism can be utilized as form of history through the memorialization of events, people's lives, careers, etc. These memorials are created by news media through the production of narratives, as well as the context provided about certain events, people or careers within those narratives. In her journal article "*To Ask Freedom for Women*": *The Night of Terror and Public*

*Memory*, Candi Carter Olson explains that, “Media, whether it is visual, written, or spatial, creates memorial as it provides narratives that give context and meaning to spaces and events. Memory is fragmentary (Hirsch & Smith, 2002), and ‘cultural memory is most forcefully transmitted through individual voice and body—through the testimony of a witness’ (Hirsch & Smith, 2002, p. 7),” (Carter Olson, 2020, p. 3). In news media coverage, such testimonies are provided through the first-hand experiences and perspectives of sources included in and interviewed for the piece of media coverage.

Memorialization takes place in three categories: form, content, and context (Gloviczki, 2015, as cited in Carter Olson, 2020). Form is the medium through which the memorialization is taking place, such as newspapers, broadcasts, websites, radio, etc. Content refers to the text, sound, video, or images present within the form of media used, while context is additional information provided about whatever is being memorialized as a way for people to better understand it (Gloviczki, 2015, as cited in Carter Olson, 2020). The context aspect of memorialization in media creates history through individual memories and the agentic experiences of individuals, and, “those individuals direct the story that is documented for the historical record,” (Carter Olson, 2020, p. 4).

### **Research Questions**

RQ 1: What are the main ways in which Gregory Hines’s career had an artistic impact within the world of tap dance, and how does news coverage of Hines reveal that impact?

RQ 2: What were the main news values present in news coverage of Hine that made his career “newsworthy” as defined by the theory of news values?

RQ 3: How does the documentation of Gregory Hines’ tap dance career in news coverage demonstrate the role of journalism as history?

## **Methodology**

To examine news media coverage of Hines and his career as a tap dancer, this paper uses a transmedia approach, analyzing a combination of print newspaper journalism and multimedia journalism. This paper specifically analyzes 50 New York Times articles, seven different television interviews and one NPR Fresh Air Radio story, all published between the years of 1978 and 2003. Ten of the 50 New York Times articles were pulled from the Reynolds Journalism Library Database in June 2020, to cover years 1978 through 2003, using the search string “Gregory Hines” and “tap” or “dance.” Forty more New York Times articles were added in February 2021, to make the research more robust, resulting in a total of 50 articles between the years of 1978 and 2003. These articles, like the first 10, all mention Hines and dance or tap dance specifically. The seven TV interviews were gathered and compiled from YouTube in a search for Gregory Hines interviews. Broadcast journalism interviews were used, while late night television interviews were excluded. The NPR radio story was gathered through a Google search of Gregory Hines radio interviews. Other NPR radio interviews were found, but only the one was available to the researcher in an accessible viewing format. All TV and radio interviews found were specifically about Hines, with the bulk of the content consisting of interviews between Hines and the reporter. All pieces of news media analyzed for this research mention tap dance in some way for the purpose of analyzing his career primarily as a tap dancer.

First, the researcher read all the articles, then she returned to the articles to code for themes present in the articles with a narrative approach. This research examines journalistic works utilizing narrative content analysis, which “permits a holistic approach to discourse that preserves context and particularity,” (Smith, 2000, p. 327). Narrative theory assumes that narratives are a basic human approach to understanding and accepting the fundamental aspects of

our experience, and narrative theorists, “study how stories help people make sense of the world, while also studying how people make sense of stories,” (The Ohio State University College of Arts and Sciences). Advocates of narrative analysis believe narratives provide information that “may not be available by other methods,” (Smith, 2000, p. 328). Through this type of analysis, the researcher coded for narrative elements within the news stories such as characters, setting, plot, characterization, point of view and themes. These common narrative elements were adjusted slightly during coding for the analysis of journalistic storytelling, specifically. For example, characters included people mentioned in the articles and news stories, and setting included the year the article or interview was published and the main location the story pertains to. Plot remained plot, characterization included words and phrases others used to describe Hines and his tap dancing, point of view involved perspectives and points of view shown through quotes by Hines himself and other characters in the stories, and themes remained themes.

The researcher also used narrative framing (Boesman, Berbers, d’Haenens, & Van Gorp, 2015) to evaluate elements such as the types of stories told, sourcing, story topics and framing, as well as approaches used when specifically discussing tap dance and race. Narrative framing is ideal because the notion of framing, “consistently offers a way to describe the power of a communicating text.” (Entman, 1993, p. 1). Examining and analyzing frames shed light on how the communication of information in a news story influences the human consciousness (Entman, 1993), which will help reveal the scope of Hines’s impact and influence within the public eye. Results found through the coding process were then further analyzed in order to determine the over-arching narratives being told about Hines throughout the various mediums of news media coverage.



From there, the researcher also evaluated each piece of news coverage for what news values they encompassed, as well as how they demonstrate the concept of journalism as a form of historical documentation through the coverage of Hines. Plots and themes found through the coding in the narrative analysis process were used to determine which news values each piece of coverage possessed. From there, each article was categorized by news value. Plots were also used to determine what elements of Hines's career were memorialized through the news coverage. Quotes by Hines and other sources were analyzed to evaluate if and how they provided greater context to the history of Hines's tap dance career or the history of tap dance in general.

### **Findings/Analysis**

As a collective whole, developed through the narrative elements of each piece of news coverage, several common narratives and themes regarding Hines's artistic impact and significance as a tap dancer emerged through the narrative analysis conducted. These main narratives included the following: Hines possessed a unique and innovative tap dance style, he was the bridge between old and new styles and generations of tap, and he helped reshape the image of the Black male tap dancer.

The narrative that Hines had his own distinctive tap dance style is mainly revealed through characterization of Hines's dancing through descriptions of his performances within event coverage and arts criticism. Hines, as a performer, was described by journalists and critics with words such as inventive, radical, artist, sexy, muscled, new-school, macho, strong, hip, cool, humble, buff, buoyant, genial, suave, laid-back, self-assured, graceful, versatile, virtuoso, and power. Hines's tap dance style specifically was described as hard, loud, messy, deeper, unexpected, visceral, monumental, roughed up, improvised, syncopated, and as having emotional weight, sheer power, overwhelming technique, exceedingly complex rhythms, and extraordinary

athleticism. In addition to being called the "greatest tap dancer of his generation" ("Dancer and Actor," 2003) and "the Pied Piper of modern tap" (Weber, 1992, p. C2), statements which illustrate his reputation as a tap dancer in general, he is also described as exhibiting a "new brand of creativity" (Kisselgoff, 1986, p. C24) and being a dance revolutionary who "took the upright tap tradition, bent it over and slammed it to the ground," (Sommer, 2003, p. E3). These latter descriptions indicate that his style was different the "traditional" style of tap dancers before him. Hines's style, which is classified as rhythm tap, differs from classical or Broadway tap styles. Rhythm tap involves grounded movements and percussive heel drops, and most of the emphasis is put on movement of the lower body. It is called rhythm tap because the style is very focused on rhythm and syncopation, which hold more importance than its aesthetic qualities (Lewis, 2013, p. 106-107). New York Times critics highlighted Hines's display of these different aspects of the rhythm tap style through critiques of his performances. He was described as breaking norms through his rhythms and syncopations, as Hines used those elements to create complex rhythmical patterns that deviated from the classic 4-4-time box. For example, New York Times critic Sally Sommer states that Hines "shattered the neat foursquare tempos," and he "purposely obliterated the tempos, throwing down a cascade of taps like pebbles tossed across the floor." Hines himself affirms this notion in an ABC news interview, saying that he intentionally tries to, "dance in different rhythmical patterns, a contemporary rhythmical patterns and feels instead of a normal 4-4 time," (Koppel, 1988).

Another unique aspect of Hines's dance style that critics mentioned often was his physical aesthetic and athleticism. The rhythm tap style is more focused on the sounds and rhythms than the aesthetics of body movement (Lewis, 2013, p. 106-107). New York Times critic Anna Kisselgoff said, "Anyone who has watched his superb virtuosity over the years

would notice how the dancer's weight-shifting style is now ornamented with a jaunty rhythmic filigree. Visual elegance, as always, yields to aural power," (1995, p. C13). Hines's athleticism also played into this element of his style, with several different critics comparing his aesthetic to that of a boxer. Sommer describes Hines as, "Hunkered over like a prizefighter, unsmiling, he cocked his head and stared at the floor as if looking for answers," (2003, p. E3), while Kisselgoff says, "Elegance takes second place in his lumbering style, and he is as apt to prance like a boxer as to parody a colleague. The essence of tap - sound and rhythm - is what concerns him, and he delivers through sheer power," (1989, p. C18). New York Times critic Jack Anderson also uses this comparison saying Hines is, "...often battering at the air with his hands as if he were boxing while he danced," (1988, p. C18). The connection made between Hines's physical appearance while dancing with the physical nature of a boxer in these descriptions, insinuates that Hines's style of dancing is athletic because boxing is athletic. Additionally, the hunkered over, lumbering stature of a boxer while fighting, contrasts the elegant appearance of the upper body in classical and Broadway styles of tap, further revealing the distinctive nature of Hines's tap style.

Another element of Hines's style described in the news coverage was his improvisation, with critics presenting it as something innovative. In a performance review, New York Times critic Jennifer Dunning said that Hines "offered a star turn that was as much brilliantly inventive, stage-covering and whole-body choreography as it was fluent improvisation." Other critics use similes, metaphors, and other literary devices to paint a visual picture for readers of this specific element of Hines's performance style. For example, one critic describes Hines as turning "little brushing steps into the equivalents of casual conversational asides," (Anderson, 1990, p. C13). Another critic said Hines, "played his floor like a drum, testing the surface until he found 'the spot,' sounding the wood for melodies, pitches and thunks," (Sommer, 2003, p. E3). These critics

use literary devices in a way that describe the more experimental, casual nature of improvisation. The inclusion of these descriptions demonstrates Hines's use of improvisation within his performances, while adjectives like "innovative" assert his unique use of this technique. These adjectives, phrases, and literary devices used throughout coverage and criticism of Hines to describe his rhythm, syncopation, and lower body aesthetic, as well as his athleticism and improvisation help construct the narrative that Hines had a unique and innovative tap dance style: rhythm tap.

Another emerging narrative within the news media coverage was that Hines was considered the bridge between old and new generations of tap dance. This is represented through narrative elements of the stories such as characters, characterization, and quotes. Journalists establish connections between Hines and all generations of tap dancers through the use of characters and sourcing within the news stories. Over 60 percent of the pieces of news media coverage analyzed mention or source other tap dancers in addition to Hines, with some of the main ones being older generation tap dancers Sammy Davis Jr., the Nicholas brothers, Honi Coles and Jimmy Slyde, and newer generation tap dancers like Savion Glover, who Hines mentored. Hines is presented as a connection and transition between old and new styles and generations of tap dancers through characterization such as that written by Sommer: "Positioned between the older tap masters he loved and the up-and-coming hard-core youngsters who loved him, Hines was the bridge, interpreting the past and pushing it toward the future," (2003, p. E3). This role of Hines as the "bridge" is also revealed and emphasized within the news coverage through quotes and anecdotes by Hines and other tap dancers. Hines's connection to the older generation of tap dancers is shown through stories of his relationships and experiences with them. During a TV interview with Bobbie Wygant, Hines talks about how he idolized Sammy Davis Jr. when he was a child.

He discusses how he first met Davis backstage at the Apollo Theatre in 1956 and how from then on, Davis majorly influenced his dancing and performing style (Wygant, 1991). In addition to his respect for the older generation, the news coverage also reveals how his experiences dancing with them inspired him to continue passing down the art form of tap to the next generation. In another TV interview, Hines discusses his feelings about filling in for Honi Coles in *Black Broadway*, in which he was able to dance with several tap legends, including Bubba Gaines and Cookie Cook:

"You know, I felt so good dancing between those two men. You know, I mean about 100 years of tap dancing, on each side of me, and they were so turned on that I was doing it with them. You know, I look at these men with awe and great respect for their ability to tap dance, and as I sit down and talk with them, you know, I find out that they look at me the same way, and they encourage me to carry on the tradition. And I feel like the experience of being around these men has made me know that I'll always tap dance. As long as I can walk, I'll tap dance and try to encourage younger people to tap dance also, because it's a great heritage," (Interview, 1980).

In addition to dancing with and learning from the older generation of tap dancers, Hines also spent the end of his career teaching and mentoring the newer generation of tap dancers. His main protégé, Savion Glover, has led tap dancing into modern day. On top of mentoring the younger tap dancers, Hines mentions Glover when sourced in articles regarding the future of tap dance. For example, Hines is quoted in a New York Times article saying, "When I was 14," Mr. Hines said, "I looked up to Honi Coles, and Sammy Davis, and Bunny Briggs. Those men were 25 or 30 years older than I was. When Savion was 14, he looked up to me. The 14-year-old dancers now look up to Savion. There's a wave going to come, with Savion in the lead," (Weber, 1992, p. C2). This exposure of Glover's name within the public eye not only helped the world of tap

dance transition into the newer generation of dancers, but it also helped shape the public's perception of where the future of the art form was heading. This quote also further demonstrates the close connection between Hines and Glover. The use of characters, characterization, and quotes within the news coverage helps reveal this narrative that Hines was the bridge between old and new.

The last major narrative told through the news media coverage is that Hines played a role in reshaping the image of the Black male tap dancer. This is revealed through mainly through characterization, the approaches to covering tap dance and race within the stories, as well as personal perspectives and experiences of tap dancers through the use of quotes. When discussing Hines, New York Times critic Sommer says, "In the 1980's Hines recast the image of the black male tap-dancer and roughed up the rhythms. He added new stylistic dimensions and volume to tap, and helped to shift the perceptions of the tap-dancer from an entertainer to a serious dance artist," (2003, p. E3). Hines was described as making tap cool, sexy, and macho, something it had not been seen as previously. Tap dancing suffered from a decline from the 1950s through the 1970s after the Golden Age of Hollywood due to a decline of movie musicals and the introduction of commercial television (Ames & Siegelman, 1977). However, there was also a decline in interest in tap, specifically amongst young Black people, which is revealed in the news media coverage through discussion of tap dance and race and through the quotes of tap dancers. Journalists and critics Dunning, Weber, and Leslie Bennetts all mention the concept of tap dance being perceived as "Uncle Tom-ish" through the utilization of quotes by tap dancers. For example, Hines's brother, Maurice Hines, is quoted saying:

"Some black dancers believe that racism has also played a part. 'For a long time, the young black dancers were just not interested,' says Maurice Hines, who succeeded his

brother as the star of "Sophisticated Ladies." "I would say to the younger dancers, 'Why don't you want to learn tap,' and they'd say: 'I don't want to tap. That's too Uncle Tom.' I realized after that in their minds, the reference was Bill Robinson playing the servant in Shirley Temple movies." "In contrast, many of today's young people have no such preconceptions." (Bennetts, 1984, p. C1).

People had turned away from tap because they were upset by the stereotypes inherited from the minstrel shows. Tap did not represent something young Black people could be proud of (Weber, 1997). Through the news media coverage, Hines's stronger, more athletic tap style is characterized as one of the reasons people took interest in tap dance again, with that interest really continuing on through Glover's influence. This is specifically revealed through the quotes and first-hand perspectives of tap dancers sourced in the stories.

While narrative analysis revealed what narratives were told about Hines and how they were told, analysis of news values throughout the news media coverage revealed why these stories were told. The main news values present in the news coverage of Hines were prominence, timeliness, and proximity. Roughly 98% of the 58 pieces of news coverage analyzed, which included 50 articles, seven TV interviews, and one radio story, contained the news value of prominence. This was because Hines was a well-known and influential person in the world of tap dance, for all the reasons revealed through the narrative analysis, including his unique and innovative style, his role as the bridge between old and new generations of tap dancers, and his role in helping reshape the image of the Black male tap dancer. In addition to his reputation within the world of tap dance, Hines was also a prominent figure within the larger entertainment industry in general, having found success in the Hollywood film and TV industries, on Broadway, and even in music. The New York Times articles analyzed were either about him and

his performances, films or artistic works. If they were not specifically about him, the journalists included him as a source while discussing other topics, especially tap dance, because the presence of his name provides credibility and the news value of prominence to the article. Six out of seven of the TV interviews were regarding Hines's newly released, ongoing, or upcoming artistic projects, including films and Broadway shows. The NPR story radio story was a feature on him following his death in 2003 because he was such a prominent figure. The news coverage itself also contributed to Hines's prominence by continuing to place him in the public eye and shining light on his artistic work and success.

Proximity and timeliness were also common news values present in news coverage of Hines. Proximity played a key role in the New York Time articles, as Hines spent a large portion of his life in New York. Many of the articles pertained to local tap dance performances in New York, as well as Hines's success in various Broadway shows. The news value of timeliness was present because most of the events Hines performed at were covered or previewed within a week of the performance. Just as well, coverage of his film career focused on current releases in relation to when the articles were written and published.

Much of the coverage of Hines serves as a historical record of sorts of his tap dance career through the documentation and memorialization (Carter Olson, 2020) of his work and performances. Aside from the movies he starred in and various tap dance performances of his that were captured on video, some of the New York Times articles analyzed for this research previewed, covered or critiqued Hines's local tap dance or Broadway performances. For those performances not captured on video, these articles serve as a record of Hines's artistic work through the testimony of the writer or critic for people who were not able to view the performances live as audience members or not aware that they took place.



In the case of coverage of Hines, memorialization in the form of context is provided through the perspectives of sources within the stories. Specifically, quotes from Hines himself within the news coverage provide more context to his career and tap style through his discussion of why he does what he does and why he dances the way he does. For example, in a TV interview, Hines says the following:

“I try to really express myself while I'm dancing, and as I dance, there are a lot of emotions that come up for me, so I try just to lose all consciousness in terms of actually what I'm doing, and just try to express myself, and so also I try to dance in different rhythmical patterns, a contemporary rhythmical patterns and feels instead of a normal 4-4 time,” (Koppel, 1988).

This statement reveals that Hines intentionally put an emphasis on dancing from the heart and utilizing syncopation to make his rhythmic patterns more unique and complex. It also explains the mindset Hines encompasses while dancing, which in this case provides greater understanding of the nature of tap improvisation, an element of his style that he was well-revered for.

In addition to Hines's tap dancing, quotes within the news coverage of Hines also provides context to the greater history of tap dance as an art form through the documentation of experiences and perspectives of tap dancers themselves. For example, the notion that young, Black tap dancers were disinterested in tap dancing because of it being too “Uncle Tom” was revealed through quotes by various tap dancers, including Hines's brother Maurice.

### **Summary/Conclusions**

Gregory Hines had an impact within the world of tap dance through his unique, rhythmic, and improvisational tap style, his role as a bridge between the old and new generations of tap dancers and styles of tap dance, as well as his influence on the image and perception of the lack

male tap dancer. These same impacts also go beyond the sphere of tap dance and extend into the general public, as his impact played a part in keeping the art form of tap dance alive in America. If Hines had not taken what he learned from the older generation of tap dancers and continued to inspire and teach the younger generation of tap dancers, the continuation of the tradition may have died off completely during its decline following the Golden Age of Hollywood.

Hines's return to tap in the 1970s played a significant role in its revival through his push to have tap dance recognized and appreciated. Additionally, his role in transforming the image of the Black male tap dancer into something cool, strong, exciting, and something that young Black people were interested in becoming, the newer generation of tap dancers like Savion Glover, who have maintained and increased the popularity of tap dance over the past few decades may have never tried in the first place. Hines's influence augmenting the reception of the art form on several different levels has allowed tap dance to continue and gain appreciation in modern day.

The news coverage of Hines reveals this artistic impact through the narratives which illustrated Hines in his lifetime and career, the documentation of his artistic work, and the context provided through quotations and other forms of perspectives within the stories. The news coverage of Hines also helped contribute to his scope of influence in the field of tap dance by covering and promoting his artistic work and continuing to put his name in the public eye in a positive light. This increased visibility of Hines further enabled him to continue his work and become a prominent figure in the world of tap dance and the greater entertainment industry in general. This prominence is what made Hines and his career newsworthy as defined by standard news-value criteria.

Lastly, this coverage of Hines's career also demonstrates the role of journalism as history through the memorialization of his career and performances, and through deeper context

provided through perspectives, experiences, and quotes from Hines and other tap dancers. Quotes and perspectives also memorialize the decline in interest in tap dance by young Black tap dancers, of whom Hines was able to help reignite interest from through his cool, strong, and innovative tap style. The various layers of Hines's artistic impact go deep, and those layers are revealed, showcased, and explored through news media coverage about him.

#### *V. Journals: Exploring Hines's Influence Through Personal Reflection and Creativity*

In addition to analyzing the scope of Gregory Hines's artistic impact within the world of tap dance through news media coverage, the researcher also explored elements of Hines's tap style through her own creativity and training as a dancer and artist. Tap dancing for 17 years, and growing up watching and admiring Hines's work, the researcher wanted to further explore Hines's work and style from a dance perspective through the form of journals. These journal entries, which include analyses of Hines's performances, and documentation of her training, performance planning, rehearsal experiences, all exhibit the researchers' artistic journey examining Hines's style and applying what she learned into her own dancing and artistry. This experience culminated in the researcher creating, executing, and filming her own Hines-inspired tap dance performance, intended to encapsulate his tap-dance style. Elements of the news media research were also utilized to inform the creation of the performance.

#### **Studying Style**

These journals contain personal reflections and analysis about performance videos on YouTube by Gregory Hines, the tap "masters," and Savion Glover. I watched these videos to analyze the style and recurring patterns of Hines's tap dancing throughout time, so I could apply those stylistic elements to my own tap dancing while training for and creating a performance

inspired by him. I also watched several videos of older generation tap dancers, known as the tap “masters,” and younger generation tap dancer Savion Glover, all of whom Hines had connections with, in order to analyze the older stylistic elements he was influenced by, as well as newer stylistic elements he passed down to the new generation of tap dancers.

**Entry One** – “Gregory Hines Solo, Tap Scene White Nights” ((jbbe2, 2009):

His sounds are very focused on the rhythm, but not necessarily the direct rhythm of the music. He more so focuses on the off beats, and he tries to create his own rhythm inside of or even complementary to the rhythm of the music playing in the background. His movements are very grounded, and he really drills his feet into the floor, which I know is a major characteristic of the rhythm tap and hoofing. He does lots of paradiddles and cramp rolls. He uses lots of heels, steps, stomps, and stamps. He also uses a variety of rhythmic speeds and patterns, including lots of eighth and sixteenth notes. He tends to counterbalance slower rhythms with faster rhythms. Although he does shuffles, they are very small and close to the ground. He will also repeat several rhythms, or a specific combination of steps, in a row to emphasize it before moving onto a new one. Even when he lifts his leg to do someone turning, pivoting movements (1:23), he is still very grounded, and the turns are initiated by scuffs. Although he is grounded, he travels a lot. His groundedness may contribute to his ability to travel quickly without falling easily. He never has dull, single movements or sounds. It is always a multitude of sounds created by what appears to be smaller movements created by greater articulation of the foot and ankle to make more sounds at a time on one foot. The running scene toward the middle and end is very athletic. I remember from briefly watching an interview with him, he said that he loved Gene Kelley because he was so athletic. This supports the idea of Hines being a connector between old and new styles of tap, and a bridge between generations. He seems less focused on the steps

themselves and more focused on how his body feels creating the steps and how the rhythms of his sounds make him feel. The whole routine is improvisation, which he was famous for.

**Entry Two** – “Gregory Hines Sammy Davis Jr.’s 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration”

(timofey1977tm, 2011):

Sammy Davis Jr. was one of Hines’ major influences in tap when he was growing up. This is Hines’s tribute to one of his idols, and he prefaced the performance saying he was going to dance out his emotions. At the beginning, his tapping alternates with the music. They go back and forth almost like a conversation. Hines looks like he listens to the music and lets that inform what rhythm he is going to create with his feet. It is improvisation, which I have mentioned before, he was very well known for. So, no rhythm or steps are the same. He is constantly creating new ones. You can tell by watching him that he really feels the music, and he lets those feelings flow out through his feet in the form of tap steps. We all feel a certain way when music plays. There are certain beats our bodies want to move to. I think often in Hines’s dancing, especially when he dances to music, the feeling he gets from the music informs his feet of what their unique rhythm is going to be, and how it will complement the rhythm of the music playing. When the music stops (2:20) he takes over and begins creating his own rhythm as opposed to creating a rhythm based off the music. This is also characteristic of Hines’s dancing as he often creates his own rhythm and music with just his feet. This style of his reinforces the age-old notion that tap is a way of creating music with your body. From this point on in the tribute, his movements are very small and isolated, but you can tell he achieves this by allowing his ankles to remain loose. He does a lot of paradiddle variations, with lots of emphasis on the use of his heels. Similar to the very beginning, he starts with one set of steps that he repeats, and then he gradually makes the combination more complex by adding in more steps or sounds. Unlike old-

style, Fred Astaire-era tap, Hines appears to not be on relevé or the balls of his feet the majority of the time. He tends to utilize the whole underside of the shoe, including the ball and the heel. Although this gives the appearance of him tapping on flat feet most of the time, he is still able to articulate a variety of small sounds and movements, which I also think is a result of not tensing up his ankles. His arm movements, which are not talked about as much, are very relaxed and natural. They are not placed. When Davis gets up and dances with him, he shows many similarities to Hines's style, revealing the influence Davis had on him as a tap dancer. Davis also performs small, intricate sounds and movements, which he creates through the utilization of loose ankles. He also creates his own rhythm based off the music.

**Entry Three** – “Gregory Hines performing the Step Dance alongside the originator Bill Bojangles Robinson” (jazzdance, 2020):

Bill Bojangles, another one of Hines's influences, was a pioneer of tap dancing in America. Hines played him in the TV movie *Bojangles*. This video shows clips from Hines's performance in the movie, as well as side-by-side footage of Bojangles' famous step dance. This performance utilizes both the balls and heels of the feet, and a lot of utilization of the stairs as a prop. He also does wings, shuffles, and cramp rolls. Through the dancing on and running up and down of the stairs, Bojangles represents his athleticism, which is something Hines is also known for showcasing in many of his performances. Something specific I noticed in this video that is not related to the tap dancing itself, is the difference in the use of facials by the two men. For Bojangles, and Hines's performance as Bojangles, the face is smiling the entire time. It is a very big, cheesy, performance smile, and not a natural smile. It is very much representative of putting on a show or a performance. From other videos I have watched of Hines tap dancing as himself, his face is very natural and not a forced cheesy smile. Unlike some other tap dancers, in which it

feels very much like a performance, many of the times I watch Hines dance feel more intimate than watching just a regular performance. You feel like you are in the room with him.

**Entry Four** – “Rare Gregory Hines Tap Dance Footage” (Louisboo, 2008):

This performance is a prime example of Hines’s style of improvisation tap dancing. In this video, he does not dance to music. Instead, he creates his own music and rhythms with his feet. He is very grounded and in tune with his body and his feet. Again, I notice that he uses a lot of heels and stomps. He tends to always incorporate some sort of paradiddle sequence in his performance, especially when increasing the speed of the rhythm, or when trying to accomplish 16<sup>th</sup> notes timing. He does wings, which although they require jumping, he still seems so grounded into the floor. It is not only grounded in terms of his balance and use of his feet on the floor, but he also seems very connected to the ground and with his feet. His athleticism is also represented well in this performance through his use of traveling across the floor and through various turn sequences. I also enjoy the moment (0:50) in which he uses the wooden post, again showing his utilization of improvisation. Going back to his creation of rhythms, I have noticed he achieves this so well not only by the syncopation of the sounds he is making, but also by the parts of his shoe that he uses to make those sounds. He does a very good job of using every part of his shoe in order to create a wide variety of different sounds. Those different sounds combined with different combinations of those sounds result in such a creative, authentic rhythm unique to him. I also enjoy that when he finds a specific rhythm that he really likes, he repeats it several times for emphasis. Something else, I keep noticing, and especially in this video, is the intimate feeling between Hines and the audience during his performances. This makes me question the idea of just doing a video performance because I feel like I need an audience of some kind because that relationship seems like such a vital part of his performances. I know COVID-19

really limits us on this, but even if it was a socially distanced audience of less than 10 people that we could also film just so I would have people's energy to feed off of, I think that would be beneficial.

**Entry Five** – “Gregory Hines and the Tap Masters 1989” (nathanjames1978, 2020):

This will forever be one of my favorite scenes from the movie *Tap*. In this scene, Hines dances/battles with some old, legendary tap dancers, who also happen to be some of his major influences growing up. Here are characteristics I noticed about each of the legends:

- Arthur Duncan – very quick, athletic movements. He uses his entire leg and keeps bent knees for optimum range of motion. He is also able to balance well, and perform quick, athletic movements on one leg.
- Bunny Briggs – also displays flexibility through utilization of bent knee placement. He also utilizes loose ankles in order to create more sounds with only one movement of the foot. Plays off of the piano notes to create his own rhythms.
- Jimmy Slyde – Obviously, which goes with his name, Jimmy was known for his use of sliding and gliding across the floor effortlessly. He never loses his balance and stays connected to the floor. Like Hines, Slyde will repeat the same rhythm several times for emphasis before moving on to the next one, which I enjoy. He also turns very smoothly, just like his sliding.
- Steve Condos – very small, intricate movements, with emphasis in the use of the heels and bent knee placement.
- Harold (Bunny) Nicholas – One of my favorite tap dancers of all time. He doesn't use the music, and he creates his own sounds. A key component of his style, he is very athletic,



which is represented in the video through his use of wings, quick-paced movements, turns and splits.

- Sandman Sims – also utilizes bent knees and loose ankles for greater ability to produce intricate sounds with ease. He does wings and other quickly paced athletic movements.
- Sammy Davis Jr. – quick, intricate movements. With no music, he creates his own rhythm with his feet. He and Hines feed off each other’s rhythms to create their next unique one.

Hines utilizes bits and pieces of techniques used by all of the older tappers in the video, which confirms the idea of him being influenced by older generations but being a bridge to the new generation with his own unique tap style.

**Entry Six** – “Gregory Hines - "I Got Rhythm/Fascinating Rhythm" (Gene Kelly Tribute) | 1982 Kennedy Center Honors” (TheKennedyCenter, 2017):

I love that Hines talks about his career in dancing, singing, and acting in this video in reference to him being influenced by Gene Kelly. In several of the articles I have read about Hines so far, other people who were really close to him have said that although he did many things and was a triple threat, dancing influenced everything he did. When he starts dancing, I notice that he uses a lot of steps and stomps to slow down or break a quicker rhythm. He performs athletic moves in this routine, such as over-the-tops and moves utilizing the stair steps. This is most likely in tribute to Gene Kelly because Hines has said in past interviews that he was a big fan of Gene Kelly because he was so athletic in his dancing. When the music is playing, he performs steps that create rhythms that compliment the rhythm of the music well. In the moments when no music is playing and it is just him, Hines creates his own rhythms. He does very quick movements, again, utilizing the looseness of his ankles in order to produce a greater

number of sounds within one movement of the foot. I think something I have noticed that he incorporates into almost every performance I have ever seen him do is some sort of paradiddle combination.

**Entry Seven** – “New Tap Shoes for Max. Tap (1989)” (C'mon Dance For Us, 2018):

In this video, especially towards the beginning, Hines's moves are not incredibly complicated. He keeps them simple in order to really be able to focus on the sounds and rhythms he is creating. In this scene of the movie, Hines has put microphones in his shoes, so that every time he makes a sound with any part of his foot, the sound is electronically transmitted through speakers in the form of unique electronic sounds. The focus in this case is less so about the difficulty of the moves themselves, and more so about the sounds he is making; the music he is creating. Again, he incorporates paradiddles. These seem to be a signature move in almost every performance he does. He uses the simplicity of the moves he is performing as an opportunity to increase the athleticism of the performance with more jumps, as well as more traveling across the stage and up the stairs. Although the moves are simple, they are very rhythmic. He utilizes syncopation in these simpler moments as well, which allows a simple step heel, step heel, to sound more interesting. It gives the rhythm an edge to it. He also does these single wings that I have seen him do in several other performances, which may be another move on top of paradiddles that would be a key move to incorporate when choreographing my performance inspired by him. However, since many of his dances are improvisational, which is what he was really well known for, I may be more inclined to do an improvisational tap performance, just keeping that vocabulary in the back of my head to pull out when the time feels right. With Hines, which is represented near the end of the dance when he is dancing to the bongo drums, he can

make even simple heel movements interesting because of his focus on the rhythm. It's all about the rhythm. Feeling the music and the beat and translating those feelings through his feet.

**Entry Eight** – “This is the ‘Hooper's Club’!” (SimmySlydeJr2, 2010):

This is not necessarily related to Hines's dancing in the video, but at the beginning, the older gentleman tells the woman she cannot join the club because she's a woman. He says it's a hooper's club. This makes me wonder if the style of hoofing is not traditionally done by females, which makes my desire to explore and perform this style as a female for my thesis even more interesting. I am not sure if they are referring specifically to the style of hoofing in this context, or whether they are just using “hoofing” as a nickname for tap dancing in general in the movie. This is something I am curious to look more into the history of in future research. When the older gentleman begins to dance, he does tend to end movement phrases with stomps, which is characteristic of the hoofing style. The rest of the gentlemen, as they perform, continue on to all use lots of heels, and they utilize loose ankles and athletic movements. When Maurice Hines dances, he uses lots of turns, also displaying athleticism. When Gregory Hines dances, he does very simple movements more focused on stomps and syncopation of rhythm. When Gregory and Maurice dance together, the older gentleman stops them, but I am not completely sure why. I may need to watch the whole movie to gain context on this. Were they swaying away from the hoofing style? Were they just getting carried away? I am not too sure.

**Entry Nine** – “The Cotton Club (1984) - Death and Dance - James Remar - Gregory Hines” (Awstriae, 2014):

I picked another scene from the Cotton Club movie, but this one is a solo. Right off the bat, Hines uses small movements of the heels and begins a paradiddle variation of some kind. He then begins moving one foot back and forth whilst pivoting and traveling with the other foot. I

like this because it also represents his use of a loose ankle in order to create a multitude of different sounds with only one move or swing of the foot. This technique is definitely one I need to explore more when beginning to practice his style. He does some pull back variations as well, but they are so small and so isolated. It seems that in this performance, as well as many of his other ones, he uses either paradiddles or paddle and rolls to increase speed and rhythm.

Throughout the performance, his movements are very small, but very intricate. He continues to keep his ankles loose to allow for more sounds within his wings and shuffle variations. He uses turns to increase the athleticism. Towards the middle (1:55), Hines begins to dance on stair steps, which may be a little allusion or nod to Bojangles. In many of his routines, I have noticed his heavy use of heels in his movements. When I say this, I do not mean that he does not use the ball or toe of his foot because he does. However, in older-style, more classical, Fred Astaire, Gene Kelley style tap, tappers tend to stay up on the balls of their feet and rarely use the heels. With Hines, and the rhythm tap and hoofing styles in general, there tends to be a lot of step heels, with extra heel isolations, and lots of digs, stomps, stamps, and scuffs. He very much keeps his ankles loose for his shuffles as a means of incorporating extra sounds. I know there is such thing as a hooper shuffle, which I need to look more into and start practicing.

**Entry Ten** – “Sounds of the Streets Tap. Tap (1989)” (C'mon Dance For Us, 2018):

This is another one of my favorite scenes from the movie *Tap*. Everyone has gone outside because Hines's character wants everyone to listen to the sounds of the city to create their own rhythms and combinations. I think this scene is very representative of Hines's style because he seems to base the rhythms he creates off of the way sounds or beats make him feel. Two women (0:39) perform wings that although Hines does not do in this scene, he tends to do them in many other performances. Similar to paradiddles, it seems to be a go-to move for him, which is

something I need to keep in mind. There is a clip in which Hines is dancing with three other young men on the sidewalk in front of a building, in which they shuffle ball changes, shiggy bops, and more. The rhythm they create is so satisfying. They do such a nice job of varying the rhythm and syncopation throughout the combination, which I think Hines tends to do in everything he does. The only difference is that this scene is obviously choreographed instead of improvised.

**Entry Eleven** – “Gregory Hines: Tap Dance in America” (MarkChichester1, 2016):

I will admit that this special was not exactly what I expected it to be. I thought it would be about the history of tap dancing in America over time, but it was more so about showcasing tap dancing in America at the time the special was made, which was 1989. Tap dancers from all over the country were essentially invited to come together, tap together, discuss the art of tap dancing, and then finally, put on a big performance. While it was not what I expected, it still provided me with some more insight to Hines as both a tap dancer and artist. Many of the tap “masters” like Jimmy Slyde, Bunny Briggs, Honi Coles and Sandman Sims were a part of it, and so was a young Savion Glover, who was only 15 years old at the time. Hines talked several times about tap dancing being something that is passed down, which reinforces the idea of him being this bridge between old and new. He also talked about how when he sees Savion learning from and collaborating with these old tap legends, it reminds him of a similar experience he had when he himself was learning from them. The second half of the special was a lot of performing by different people, which is always fun and helpful to watch. The last performer was Savion Glover, as a sort of a symbolic sendoff of the tradition of tap into the next generation. Glover was a protégé of Hines, and it was interesting to watch his performance and see the influence of Hines in Glover’s dancing. Stylistic similarities include the improvisation, the use of more down

in the ground uses of the heels and toes, and the use of paradiddles or paddle-and-rolls to increase speed and create a consistent rhythm. Similar to Hines, Glover will repeat a certain rhythm or pattern of movements several times for emphasis before moving onto the next one. Glover also lets his feelings drive his movements, which is a major element of Hines's performances. Although the similarities and influences of Hines are evident throughout Glover's performance, he still makes it his own with the unique rhythms he creates. I think this is telling of the unique style of tap that Hines passed down to the new generation because there is enough freedom within the improvisation for every tapper to be genuinely themselves. The main thing I took away from this special was something specific Hines said about himself and something said about him during a conversation with several other tap dancers. He talked about how when he and his brother Maurice were young performers, they were always encouraged to smile and perform with their face, which is something that was difficult for him to do. This caused him from a young age to start searching for what dancing really brought to his face. He was looking for a naturalistic expression of what was happening with his feet. When he was with the masters, however, they would encourage him to improvise and make up steps. He said it was not until his 30s that he thinks he was really able to relax and started to approach true expression as a tap dancer. One of the women in the conversation then said that when Hines performs, he visibly pulls it from inside himself, "deep within his gut." One of the men then says, "Every one of those sounds really means something to him," and he goes on to explain that is what the essence of tap really is: "You want your steps to be clean, but to bring yourself, to bring the emotion, and make the taps mean something is far more important to me than just tapping." This is something else I have really noticed when watching Hines dance. The movements and sounds are not just movements and sounds. He really does put his emotions into it, and I think that is part of why he

is so amazing to watch. It was about more than just the steps to him. I think this is also why he was as famous and noteworthy as he was. As a journalist, there are some things and some people that are more “newsworthy” than others, and the people who are deemed as “newsworthy” to write about are often those who have made some kind of impact within their sphere. There are thousands, probably millions, of people in the U.S. and across the world who do tap dance, yet Hines is written about so often. He always ended up being “newsworthy,” because of his prominence within the world of tap dance.

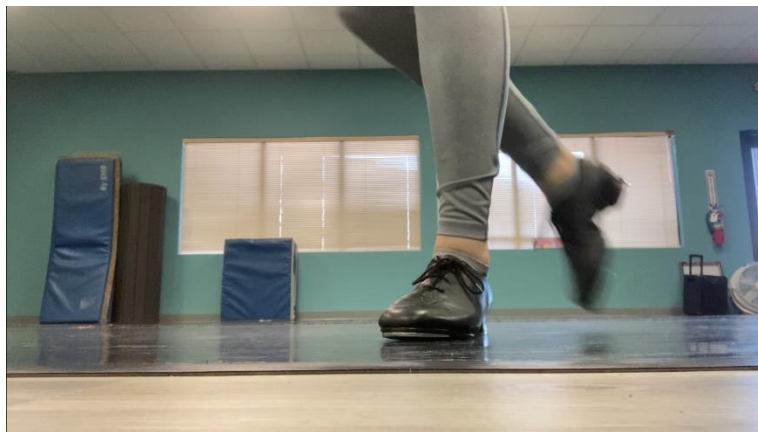
### **The Practice Process**

This next set of journals documents my growth as a tap dancer throughout my practice and training process, in which I specifically trained in ways that were similar to the style and moves I witnessed in Hines’s performances. This experience involved ten weeks of training between November 17 and March 12. During this time, I focused on drilling certain tap steps and sounds, learning foot techniques specific to rhythm tap and hoofing, and improving my rhythm and syncopation. I also dedicated time to improvisation because it was such an iconic part of Hines’s performances. These months of training eventually accumulated in me feeling prepared enough to plan and execute a performance inspired by Hines.

#### **Week One** (*November 17, 2020*)

To start out my training process, I wanted to start by learning and repeating movements Hines does in some of his performances. However, I actually found a YouTube video of a masterclass he taught in 1999 to students of the Broadway Theatre Project at the University of South Florida, so I decided to watch and take the class instead. The exercises he did with them were extremely helpful because they forced the students to focus on rhythm, as well as elements of improvisation. He started out by giving them a simple paradiddle combination, but he told

them to mess around with the initial movement and create their own unique sounds and rhythms off of it. What I found most helpful about this exercise is that Hines did not want the students to create forced rhythms off of the initial paradiddle; he wanted them to really focus on what they felt in their bodies should come next. In terms of any type of improvisation in dance, I am the most successful and most creative when I let my body take over and do what moves feel good to me, as opposed to what moves I think will look good. When I attempted the paradiddle exercise myself, I felt like I had entered some sort of trance. Tap improvisation usually makes me nervous. However, I felt so at peace doing this exercise because I just let my feet go and create whatever movements felt right, and as a result, my rhythms sounded more natural.



### **Week Two** (*December 7 – 12, 2020*)

I just got a new pair of tap shoes, which are going to take some adjusting and breaking in as I return to my Hines tap training. I have been dancing in split sole tap shoes since middle school because those were the style my dance studio required. However, most professional tap dancers wear full sole tap shoes, so I purchased a pair for this performance and for the future in general. The difference in soles has not affected me too much so far, as I have already adjusted my technique and foot placement for movements that require me to be on top of my toes. The

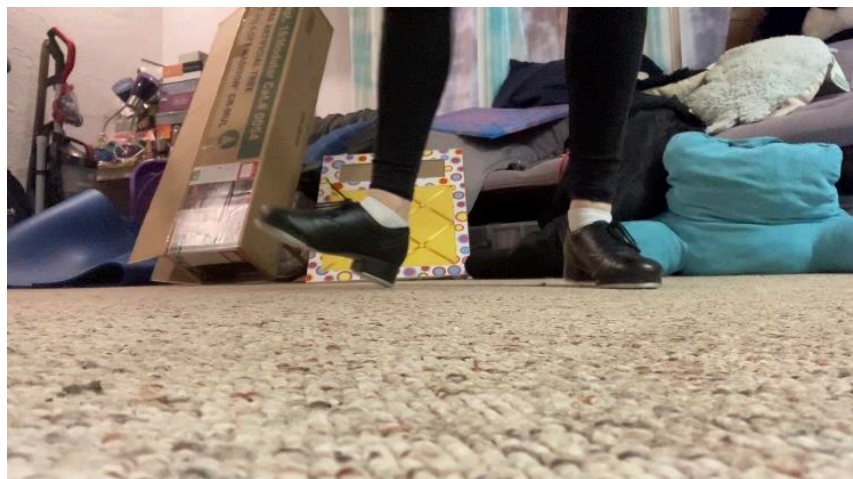


main change so far is that they are much heavier than my split sole tap shoes, but that will just take a little getting used to.



**Week Three** (*December 26, 2020 – January 1, 2021*)

This week, I spent time learning different combinations from various online tap dance videos to break my new shoes in more and get back into the swing of things after taking a two-week break from training around the Christmas holiday. These combinations, one set to music and two not set to music, allowed me to focus on a variety of training aspects. With the first combination, I was able to focus on keeping rhythm and making all of my sounds, while also gradually speeding the combination up to increase difficulty.



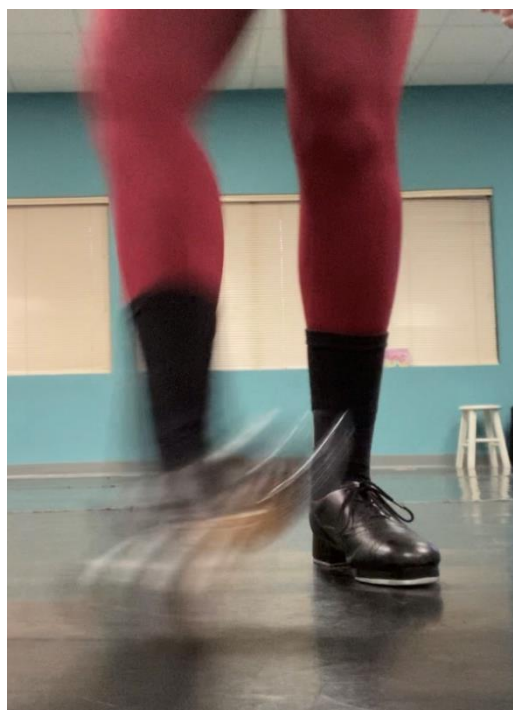
The second combination was short, but it involved single pull backs and tap turns, which allowed me to work on coordination and ankle strength. I was also able to focus on keeping rhythm, clearly executing all the sounds, and speeding up the combination for a more challenging, advanced exercise. The third and last combination I worked on this week was set to music. It allowed me to challenge myself with some more advanced steps and fast-paced tempos, while also providing an opportunity to work on matching my movements to the beat of the music and trying to stay in the pocket.

#### **Week Four** (*January 11-16, 2021*)

This week I mainly focused on taking online tap classes to practice keeping rhythm and drill my sounds. I also choreographed a few short tap combinations with music to practice keeping time, rhythm, and syncopation.

#### **Week Five** (*January 25-30, 2021*)

This week I focused on practicing movements that I want to have as part of my tap vocabulary. Many of these moves are ones that I have already learned in previous years, but I am focusing on executing them well because Hines uses a similar vocabulary of tap steps when he performs. I also really tried to focus on having loose ankles this week. I have noticed that there are certain movements, such as paradiddles, that Hines will perform at a quick speed. In order to perform fast movements while also making all of the sounds, tap dancers must have loose, relaxed ankles. I also worked specifically on hooper shuffles, which have an



extra sound compared to a regular shuffle. These require extremely loose and relaxed ankles and legs in general.

**Week Six** (*February 1-6, 2021*)

This week I continued to practice tap steps including shuffles, flaps, paradiddles and paradiddle combinations, cramp rolls, toe cramp rolls, riffs, maxi-ford grab-offs, single and double pull backs, single and double wings, other wing variations, drawbacks, shiggy bops, and different types of turns. I specifically focused on making all of my sounds. I want to have a solid tap vocabulary to be able to pull from when I start working more on improvisation. I know for me, when I do contemporary or lyrical dance improvisation, I use a balance of allowing my body to move how it feels it needs to in relation to my emotions and the beat of the music with utilizing movements from my vocabulary such as leaps, kicks, and turns. I think using this same method for tap improvisation will work well for me, and it also emulates how Hines's danced.

**Week Seven** (*February 15-19, 2021*)

This week I re-watched several of Hines's performances, slowing them down to analyze some of his quicker, more advanced movements. I also continued to practice movements I have worked on in previous weeks that he often uses in his improvisation. In addition to drilling movements to make sure I am making all my sounds, I also started working on speeding them up, especially paradiddles. I will not lie; this week was difficult for me. I felt stuck during practice because I was having an off week, and instead of releasing my stress through my tap dancing, my stress was preventing me from tap dancing to the fullest of my abilities. This also made it difficult to work on quick movements because I was holding so much tension in my legs and ankles that I struggled to make all of my sounds. Despite having a rough week, however, I know that my weeks of practice up to now have prepared me to continue next week's practices in

a way that furthers my training and creativity. I am over halfway into my training, and I feel like have a solid amount of tap vocabulary to work with. So, for my last few weeks of training, I plan to focus mostly on improvisation.

**Week Eight** (*February 22-27, 2021*)

This week I focused on improvisation, both with and without music. When improvising with music, I tried to focus on creating my own rhythms within the rhythms of the music and not stay confined by the traditional 4/4 time box. The most challenging part of tap improvisation for me is starting it. I feel awkward and do not know how to start because I am scared of my taps sounding weird, but once I settle into it and really let my body feel the music, I become more comfortable.

**Weeks Nine and Ten** (*March 1-12, 2021*)

These past two weeks, I have continued to focus on improvisation, mainly with music. Building upon my training from previous weeks, I really tried to focus on syncopation and creating my own rhythms. These two weeks were a little easier in terms of comfortability with improvisation. For the past few weeks, I really tried to get in the zone, but I always ended up getting caught up in my head about how I looked and how my taps sounded. Recently, I have just let loose. I genuinely have been able to press play on the music, let myself release all my frustrations and emotions through my feet, and end the dance not remembering what I did. Instead of fixating on a certain mistake, like I tend to do, I just let it be. I definitely was able to access the more therapeutic side of dance these past two weeks, which has been really necessary for my mental health.



### **Planning a Hines Inspired Performance**

Planning the performance element of this thesis, which entailed creating a dance performance inspired by and in the style of Hines, was extremely challenging because of the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic. My initial vision was to have a small, safe, masked, and socially distanced performance. I knew that because of the pandemic that I would not be able to have a large audience, however, I was hoping I could have at least five to 10 people watch in-person. My heart was so set on an in-person performance because Hines almost always performed in front of an audience. During his live, non-Broadway performances he would often talk with the audience a little bit, and even when he did not address them directly, you could tell that audience energy played into his dancing as he seemed so excited to share a story with them through the sounds of his feet. There are, of course, several exceptions, him having done solo dance scenes alone in movies. However, even in most of the films he danced in, there were still either other actors or extras watching him. He performs both in front of larger audiences and in more intimate settings with some other dancers in various scenes in “Cotton Club,” “White Nights,” and “Tap.” Dance was a way for Hines to connect with himself, but also a way to connect with other people. Sadly, due to COVID-19, I found out that I was not able to have any kind of in-person thesis performance. We then resorted to our back up plan: a dance film.

I started thinking about what location I wanted to shoot at, and I decided that instead of just doing one dance in one location, I wanted to do several in various locations: in a studio, on a stage, and somewhere outside. The reason I wanted to do these three specific places is because they all connect to Hines in some way, and a dance in each differing location would allow me to represent a different aspect of his dancing and performance style. I asked Taylor Hutchison, a videographer and former ETSU dance minor, to film, and she agreed to take on this project with me. I knew her experience with dance itself and filming dance specifically would be extremely helpful in the planning, filming, and editing processes.

For the studio scene, I thought it would be fun to do a tribute to Hines's tap solo in the movie *White Nights*. The scene entails Hines in a dance studio playing music on a boom box and doing tap improvisation. As a nod to this scene, I decided I wanted to wear a tight white top like he did, and I used the same piece of music he did: "tapDANCE" by David Foster. I wanted to utilize this scene as a chance to showcase the improvisation element of Hines's stylistic legacy, as well as his athleticism. I simply played the music and improvised while filming.

For the stage scene, I wanted it to have more of a performance style and be reminiscent of several of the tribute performances Hines had done for tap dancers such as Sammy Davis Jr. This entailed using music that would play back and forth with my tap dancing, as if the two were having a conversation. Hines has done several solo performances like this with music, but I also wanted to do it because the same idea also represents the nature of the tap challenge, of which Hines also participated in often. The only difference in my case is that instead of going off the beats and rhythms of another tap dancer, I would be going off the beats and rhythms of the music playing. The elements of Hines's style I wanted to showcase in this piece were his rhythm and syncopation. This involved a mix of improvisation and choreography.

For the last piece, I knew I wanted to tap dance outside somehow. There is a scene in the movie *Tap*, in which Hines and other tap dancers go outside at night on the streets of New York and dance to music and the sounds of the city. I knew I wanted to dance somewhere in downtown Johnson City, Tennessee. At first, I wanted to dance in front of a mural in between ETSU's campus and downtown, but we ended up choosing King Commons Park in actual downtown. In terms of making this dance represent a certain aspect of Hines's style, I struggled with deciding what I wanted to showcase. This decision came about last minute during the rehearsal process, with the song choice and choreography also taking place extremely close to the time of filming.

My initial plan was to separate each dance with b-roll and voice-overs of me talking about Hines and his career. However, I decided I wanted to leave some amount of interpretation up to the audience, and I instead chose quotes from Hines that I felt like represented or connected to each dance in some way.

### **The Rehearsal Process**

This next set of journals documents my experiences rehearsing for my dance film. The rehearsal process consisted of three weeks – two of which coincided with my regular training and one of which took place during the week of filming the dances.

#### **Week One** (*March 1-7, 2021*)

For the first week of my rehearsals, I mainly focused on the first dance, which was completely improvisation. This tied into my last few weeks of practice and training, in which improvisation is what I was worked on the most. In terms of rehearsing for this piece specifically, I just improvised to the music I knew I would be dancing to at least three times a day, in order for my body to get used to the rhythms and progression of the song.

**Week Two** (*March 8-12, 2021*)

During this second week of rehearsals, I have continued to work on improvisation for the first dance, and I have started choreography for the second dance. For the stage dance, I have utilized improvisation as a choreography method. I played the music and filmed myself improvising. Then I chose the parts I liked of what I spontaneously created, re-learned them, continued to define them and started to practice them as set of solidified choreography.

**Week Three** (*March 13-19, 2021*)

At the beginning of this week, I mainly focused on improvisation to my planned song in preparation for filming the first dance. Once that element of the filming was completed, I spent the middle of the week rehearsing for the other two dances. I continued to practice the choreography I created for the second performance, and I also left a small amount of room for actual improvisation during filming as well. The rehearsal process for the last dance was done very last minute due to the fact that I was stuck creatively and did not know what to do. The day before filming, I decided I wanted the third performance to represent me as a tap dancer more so than Hines. I wanted it to showcase that I was able to take what I learned from studying his style, but still make it my own. I picked a song that day, Caroline Glaser's performance of "Put Your Records On" from the reality TV show *The Voice*. I heard the song randomly and really felt the urge to choreograph to it. I used the improvisation to choreography technique once again, dancing to the music how I felt in the moment, and then keeping what I liked as solidified pieces of choreography. The day of filming that dance, I practiced the choreography one last time to make sure I was ready.

**Performance Evaluation and Reflection**



Executing and filming my [Hines-inspired tap performance](#) was a whirlwind. We filmed on March 16 and 19, Taylor edited between March 16 and 25, and final edits were officially completed the evening of March 25. This was definitely a project of growth for me as an artist, performer, and human being.

The first section of the film, titled “Inspiration & Improvisation,” starts out with a quote by Hines that reads:

“One of the things about tap dancing live and improvising is every now and then, a mistake is made. And every now and then, I'll do a spin, you know a lot of times I'll spin and land right on the dime, but sometimes I spin, and I don't stop. I'm a little off balance and what that does is it causes me to somehow try to recover, and then I'm able to come up with a step that makes it work. There's something real about that,” (Wygant, 1989).

The camera then shows me walking down the halls of the ETSU Mini-Dome on my way to the building's dance studio. I enter the room, put my tap shoes on, and turn on some music. This is the studio dance scene in which I improvise for the entirety of the dance. After dancing for several minutes, I slowly start walking out of frame.





Then, the second section of the film, titled “Emulation & Execution,” begins with another Hines quote, which reads:

“I think that was when I began to awaken to the joys of expressing myself as a tap dancer - I discovered that I had a great vocabulary of steps that had been given to me by various dancers and teachers as I grew up. So, when I went out on the stage and it was time to improvise, I had a lot of things to call on,” (Dunning, 2001).

This quote leads into the stage scene, in which the camera films me entering the ETSU’s D.P. Culp Student Center auditorium. There, I perform my dance on the stage, with the rhythms from my tap shoes and the music talking back and forth to each other, as if having a conversation. When the performance is finished, the screen fades to black.





With the third and final section of the film, titled “Appreciation & Individualization,” one last quote appears on the screen, reading:

"That is one of the aspects of every form of dance, really - the individual that comes out within the movement. You know, I idolized Sammy Davis growing up and tried to dance like him, and Sandman Sims, who was in the movie, used to personally teach me in an alley way behind the apollo theatre when I was performing there as a kid. And I would try, but I think that there's a natural evolution in every artist to find themselves and find their own style. And maybe one has to emulate the one that person admires the most until their own style comes through," (Wygant, 1989).

Following this quote, I dance my last performance outside on the sidewalk in King Commons park in downtown Johnson City. I walk into the park, put my headphones on, and let myself dance to the music.



The scene ends with me leaving the frame in slow motion and the shot fading into the lights. The film ends with the words “Dedicated to Gregory Hines” across the screen, along with a photo of him.

After filming, I was initially worried that the dances I performed were not good enough. However, with any dance performance I do, the dance always tends to look better than it felt executing it in the moment. After watching the entirety of the film with all the different sections connected together, I was very pleased with how the performances turned out. To start, Hutchison did an amazing job with the filming, and the aesthetic of the video is incredible. She did a stunning job capturing my movements from a variety of different camera angles, while still showcasing the feet and the art of tap dancing, specifically. She also made a significant effort to

film and edit the video as close to my vision for it as possible, which I really appreciated and think we succeeded in.

In terms of the dancing, I am proud of what I accomplished through these performances. In the first, improvised studio dance, I really allowed myself to just let go and dance to the beat of the music. I feel as though I was able to do so in a spontaneous manner, while also executing the more rhythm tap style of Hines's dancing. Although there were elements that were not perfect, that is the whole point of the first dance. The quote used before the dance describes it perfectly; when you are improvising, you may not do the steps perfectly. You may fall, you may mess up a rhythm, but that is what makes it real. That was something that made Hines's so inspirational, is that he was real and truly put his emotions into his dancing. If you are putting your heart and your energy into it, the dance is going to be more genuine in the end, despite small mistakes made. I think the fact that I allowed myself to go into the filming that day not so much in the mindset of performing, but more so in a mindset of allowing myself to dance my emotions out and use tap as a form of stress relief really allowed me to create something that was authentic to myself as an artist, while also representing an element of tap dance that was so well represented by Hines.

I was also satisfied with how the second dance turned out because I was able to execute the rhythms and sounds better than I expected myself to. I was really nervous about filming that scene, particularly the ending, in which I do a set of quickly paced paradiddles, which was a move Hines often utilized to impress his audience with his speed. I am proud of myself for trying to execute more challenging movements. I think the rhythms I was able to create showcase my growth in syncopation and difficulty level, elements I improved upon through studying Hines's

dancing. I also think that although an audience could not be present, we managed to create a performance feeling by utilizing the stage.

The last of the three dances was my favorite, however, because I chose at the last minute to make it more personal to me as an artist and tap dancer. I was really stuck for a while on figuring out what I wanted to do for the outdoor scene because I wanted the last dance to end the film on a high note. I was putting a lot of pressure on myself because the prospect of creating a work of art that is not only intended to honor my dance idol's legacy, but also showcase his style was extremely intimidating. I knew that no matter how hard I tried or how long I trained, there was no way that I was ever going to be able to dance exactly like Hines. No one has ever danced or will ever dance exactly like Hines because he was completely and authentically himself. As a result of this, I was worried that my performance for this thesis was not going to be good enough, for my or anyone else's standards. However, after rereading a quote Hines said in one of the TV interviews that I analyzed, I cried of joy because I was able to let my expectation of perfection go. In the quote, Hines says, "...there's a natural evolution in every artist to find themselves and find their own style. And maybe one has to emulate the one that person admires the most until their own style comes through," (Wygant, 1989). This process of individualization allows you to become your own artist, and it hit me that I do not have to dance exactly like Hines. I can take what I have learned from him, the things that I appreciate about his style like an emphasis on syncopation and the inclusion of improvisation., incorporate those aspects into my dancing, but also evolve and make it my own at the same time. Although the basis of tap dance and the common movements within the style remain the same, and the style itself changes and evolves as it is passed down through the generations, and that is the beauty of it. Allowing myself to

incorporate my own personal style and creativity into this last dance was a freeing experience, and that is why it is my favorite part of the performance.

#### *IV. Conclusion*

Both the analysis of the news media coverage and the personal creativity portions of this thesis allowed for the exploration of Gregory Hines's tap dance career and artistic legacy in differing and complementary ways. Analysis of the narratives concerning Hines in the news media coverage revealed his artistic impact through his unique tap style, his role as the bridge between old and new generations of tap, and his influence in reshaping the image of the Black male tap dancer. Hines's distinctive style was revealed in the news media coverage through characterization of Hines's dancing via descriptions of his performances within event coverage and arts criticism. Adjectives, phrases, and literary devices were used to highlight the characteristics of rhythm tap, his athleticism, and his improvisation, all creating the narrative that Hines's style was innovative. The narrative that Hines was the bridge between old and new generations of tap dancers and styles is developed through sources used in the news coverage, which included tap dancers of both the older and younger generations, characterization of Hines, and quotes from Hines that showed his connection to between old and new generations of tap dancers. Hines's role in the reshaping the image of the Black male tap dancer is revealed through characterization, the discussion of tap dance and race, and personal perspectives and experiences shown through quotes of tap dancers. Quotes specifically revealed the notion that there was a decline in interest in tap dancing from young, Black tap dancers because they considered it to be "Uncle Tom." In addition to the narratives revealed through coding, further analysis of news values showed that the majority of news coverage of Hines possessed the news value of prominence. The presence of this news value is due his artistic impact, which is revealed through

the narratives told about him. Lastly, the news media coverage of Hines also demonstrates the role of journalism as history through the memorialization of Hines's career. This is shown through the documentation of his performances, as well as the greater context provided about his career and tap dance in general through quotes.

The creative exploration and reflection allowed me to analyze his performances with knowledge from my 17 years of experience with tap dance. I utilized those analyses to create a training process that helped me feel prepared enough to eventually create, execute, and film a performance inspired by Hines. Documenting my studies of Hines's style, as well as my training, rehearsal, and performance planning experiences through journals, helped encapsulate my growth as a tap dancer, and the evolution of my understanding and appreciation of Hines's style from a personal, artistic perspective.

The analysis of news coverage also played a role in informing the creation of my creative performance. The research of news coverage provided descriptions and characterization of Hines and his tap style within the New York Times articles, and through quotes by Hines in the articles and multimedia interviews, which allowed me to further identify the visual characteristics of his style and understand why Hines danced the way he did from his own perspective. From this, I was able to further incorporate elements of Hines's style into my performance.

Through the process of creating and executing the performance, I was able to learn more in-depth about Hines's tap style in a creative way and develop an even deeper understanding and appreciation for everything he represented as an artist, as well as a deeper appreciation for the artistic evolution and versatility of the art form of tap dance. This thesis allowed me to grow as a tap dancer and choreographer, push my creative limits, and learn so much about who I am and who I want to be as a dancer and artist.



VII. *Glossary: Tap Vocabulary*

**ball** – the ball of the foot; a specific part of the tap shoe used for various steps.

**brush** – a brushing/striking of the ball of the foot on the floor; can be done in any direction.

**cramp roll** – ball-ball-heel-heel; foot pattern alternates (right-left-right-left or left-right-left-right); this move makes four sounds.

**dig** – a forward digging movement of the back edge of the heel of the shoe into the floor.

**drawbacks** – a pattern of three movements traveling backwards: step, brush (backwards), heel drop; the move alternates feet with each step. For example, step (right foot), brush backwards (left foot), heel drop (right foot), or step (left foot), brush backwards (right foot), heel drop (left foot).

**flap** – brush foot, then step on it; can be done in any direction; makes two sounds.

**heel** - the heel of the foot; a specific part of the tap shoe used for various steps.

**maxi-ford grab-off** – shuffle, jump switching feet (brush initial standing foot with all of foot mid-jump before landing on the opposite foot), toe.

**over-the-top** – step, kick leg into the air, jump over the airborne leg with opposite leg and land on it.

**paradiddle** – dig, brush (backwards), step, heel; four movements all completed on the same foot, four sounds.

**pull backs** – starting on the balls of your feet, plie, jump up and backwards, and brush both feet backwards as your feet leave the floor, land on balls of your feet (two sounds). A single pullback is starting on one foot, brushing that one foot, and landing on that foot (two sounds). A double pull back is starting on both feet but brushing and landing feet one at a time in the pattern of brush-brush-step-step, either right-left-right-left or left-right-left-right (four sounds).

**riff** – (taught in various ways) touch the ball of your foot, scuff, dig, toe drop, all on the same foot.

**scuff** – swing foot forward, hitting the back edge of the heel on the ground; similar to a dig, but where a dig stays in the ground, a scuff comes off the ground.

**shiggy bop** – starting on one flat foot, with weight in that foot, scuff heel up and forward, land in a dig, place the ball of the back foot down.

**shuffle** – brushing the foot forward, and then backward; makes two sounds.

**step** - lift and place ball of foot against the floor, putting weight in that foot.

**stamp** - lift and place flat foot against the floor, putting weight in that foot.

**stomp** – lift and place flat foot against the floor, without putting your weight in that foot.

**toe** - the toe of the foot; a specific part of the tap shoe used for various steps.

**toe cramp roll** – toe-toe-ball-ball-heel-heel; foot pattern alternates (right-left-right-left-right-left or left-right-left-right-left-right); this move makes six sounds.

**wing (double wing)** - start on balls of feet with feet together, scrape both feet outwards and into the air, brush both feet back in at the same time, land on the balls of the feet with your feet together (three sounds). A single wing is the same three movements but only on one foot.

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