

**CONTRIBUTIONS OF PRACTITIONERS**

**1940's Gene Kelly**

- During the early 1940's Gene Kelly, began making his mark as a dancer, choreographer, director and film maker in Hollywood musicals.
- His **impact on jazz was his individual, energetic dance style that combined athletic, gymnastic qualities with ballet, jazz and tap. Strong, masculine dynamics and big movements.** Constantly changing facing.
- **Broad range of music.** Irish jig and Spanish Tucano in *Anchors Aweigh*. Interpret lyrics within choreography.
- Often played relatable/traditional characters such as sailors, boy next door. Often pretends to be somebody else to try and impress, before realizing that being himself is more successful.
- **Dance reflects character and helps to progress the narrative. Tap- down to earth, ballet/modern- soulful expression.**
- **Inspired by jazz, musical theatre and film traditions** including "Make Em Laugh"- Nicholas Brothers, "Beautiful Girl"- Berkeley, coin tossing gangster in "Broadway Ballet"- Scarface, "You Were Meant for Me"- Astaire and Rogers, all from *Singin' in the Rain*.
- **Incorporated set within choreography-** Umbrella, curb and rain in *Singin' in the Rain*. Beds in *Anchors Aweigh*.
- **Performed his own stunts-** *Singin' in the Rain* and *The Pirate*.
- **Use of camera:** near and far to single camera- energy, special effects such as double exposure in "Alter Ego" dance in "Cover Girl" (1944). Montage manipulating time and space, for instance "New York, New York" montage from "On the Town" (1949). Animation. Dancing with Jerry Mouse in "Anchors Aweigh" (1945)

**1940's-70's Jerome Robbins**

- Jerome Robbins' style of jazz dance combined with classical ballet, contemporary dance, vernacular dances/ dances from other cultures and everyday gesture, allowed him to create choreography conveying characterisation, rhythmic complexity and dynamic variation.
- He followed Agnes de Mille's lead in making dance of equal importance to drama and music in the development of the storyline.
- **Bridged classical ballet and musical theatre/ jazz- status.**
- **West Side Story (1961)** To help the young cast grow into their roles, Robbins did not allow those playing members of opposite gangs (Jets and Sharks) to mix during the rehearsal process.
- *West Side Story* expanded the role of the director-choreographer, **developed the concept musical** (dance and music furthered the plot and was truly integrated into the dramatic action. **He furthered the communication of American themes, by exploring the realities of prejudice, gang conflict and culture. Often included female characters who were strong and independent.**
- Robbins became **ballet master of the New York City Ballet in 1972 and worked almost exclusively in classical dance throughout the next decade.**

**1960's-70's Bob Fosse**

- Distinctive and unique stylistic features **Inverted limbs and hunched-over posture – 'Slick, erotic and intense' movement style influenced from performing in vaudeville and Broadway** beginning as a child.
- Became famous in the 1960's – 70's for shows such as *Sweet Charity (1969)*, *Carbaret (1972)* and *Pippin (1972)*.
- **Choreography explores darker more gritty themes in contrast to the 1940's musicals – Chicago (1975) (MURDER) & Carbaret (1972) (RISE OF NAZISM).** The movie *All that Jazz (1979)* was about his life in the fast lane
- First director to **win an Oscar, Tony and Emmy in one year (1973).**
- **REVOLUTIONISED USE OF CAMERA- FAST CUTS, CLOSE UPS ON BODY PARTS AND AUDIENCE PERSPECTIVE. "BIG SPENDER" FROM "SWEET CHARITY" (1969).**
- His shows continue to be performed 25 years after his death - Chicago.
- Influenced many current jazz choreographers including Blankenbuehler (CHOREOGRAPHER OF HAMILTON) and music videos including Michael Jackson's 'Billie Jean'.

**Stylistic features of Jazz Genre**

- Bent knees, low centre of gravity
- Isolations/Syncopation
- Use of parallel position
- Pirouettes and high kicks
- Movement emanating from torso and pelvis
- Percussive movements
- Linear Lines
- Hand gestures e.g. splayed fingers
- Strong use of limbs/Explosive energy
- Quick changes of direction
- Dramatic changes in levels
- Percussive movements
- Facial expressions
- Use of comedy slapstick/ to entertain
- Direct correlation with the music
- Development of movement for camera
- Development of use of props

Musical theatre is still strongly based on jazz dance, also influenced by trends such as hip hop and breakdancing. Jazz dance remains strongly linked to popular music. Jazz dance has evolved over the decades from social dance to professional performance.

**Characteristic Features of the Genre**

**1940's**

- WW11: stop popularity of social dance. BE-BOP popular music, hard beat to dance to.
- **Jazz dance influenced by ballet/modern dance as it became more professionalized** continued into 1950's. - **Laurie's Dream in Oklahoma! (1943).**
- **Jazz dance** moved from the dance halls to the stage, becoming **prominent in Broadway shows and movies**
- **Integrated musicals (camera, dance and plot all connected).** *Oklahoma! by Agnes DeMille (1943)* marked the beginning of dance as a major part of musicals. Dream sequences often work out character's wishes or used to work out a problem within the narrative - **Lili's second dream within An American in Paris (1951).**
- MGM produced many dance musicals including Gene Kelly and Judy Garland.
- Arthur Freed encouraged original musicals, not purely Broadway remakes.
- Wide variety of dance styles including tap, ballet (**On the Town**), jazz, ballroom and stage combat (**The Pirate**).
- "Father of Theatrical Jazz Dance", Jack Cole, was busy developing his technique. Jack Cole had studied modern, ballet, and ethnic dance, had been a student at Denishawn and had done choreographic work in the nightclub scene. In the 1940's there was a serious demand for groups of trained dancers for film work and **Jack Cole was the one who started developing these trained jazz dancers for the Hollywood movie musicals.**

**1950's**

- **choreographers blended jazz with other dance forms, creating dances that worked with a specific story**
- **Until the mid-1950's, term "jazz dance" often referred to tap dance, because tap dancing (set to jazz music) was the main performance dance of era.**
- **Rock and Roll music** popular - new social dances were created - **Cakewalk, Black Bottom, Charleston, Jitterbug, Boogie Woogie, Swing dancing and Lindy Hop**
- **Subject matter challenging – socio-political concepts e.g. 1957 West Side Story** Real American issues. Jazz and ballet, latin American mix.
- **Influence of Latin American music and dance enriched jazz dance as was seen in West Side Story, choreographed by Robbins.**

**1960's**

- socio-political themes **Fiddler on the Roof (1964) (Robbins)** about religious tolerance, racial harmony and homosexuality
- With the 1960's came the twist and Motown was the new musical craze and featured choreographed routines - new idea of the lead singer being spotlighted in front while the backup singers performed choreographed moves, See The Supremes and The Temptations. It carried through the 70's, 80's, in groups like En Vogue, The Jacksons

**1970's**

- Rock Musicals e.g. *Phantom* and *Grease*/Some African-American influence e.g. *The Wiz*/More varied musical and dance genres used
- **Continued exploration of socio-political themes e.g. Prohibition era in Chicago (1975).**

