

From Bharata Natyam to Bop: Jack Cole's "Modern" Jazz Dance

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It's what we used to see in the dance halls in the twenties and thirties, that is what real jazz dance is. This was a group of kids who did all those dances that were in then: the Camel Walk, the Charleston, the Lindy Hop...all stemming from African dance and all filled with authentic feeling. And the root of all these elaborations was the Lindy. Whatever is danced in the name of jazz dancing must come from the Lindy, necessarily theatricalized and broadened for the stage, of course.

—Jack Cole, "It's Gone Silly," 1963

1947 was the year Jack Cole created *Sing, Sing, Sing* to the recording made famous by "King of Swing" Benny Goodman and his Big Band.¹ "[We] kicked, spun, slammed and slid on our knees for seven minutes in true Jack Cole style," said Rod Alexander about the dance performed by the Jack Cole Dancers when it premiered in New York at the Latin Quarter (Loney 1984, 85). "Everyone came off the floor, gasped, and threw up. It was a ball-breaker, a number that asked the impossible," remembered Buzz Miller (Miller 1992). Described by critics as "a dance in the style of Harlem" (Martin 1947) and "a primitive dance of primitive ecstasy" (Terry 1947b), *Sing, Sing, Sing* was a stylized Lindy Hop, or jitterbug, that popular swing-era social dance that flung and flipped partners into "breakaway" solos and daring "air" steps. More than a step, the jitterbug was a style, a state of mind: a violent, even frenzied athleticism made it hazardous, exciting, sexual, cathartic; the jitterbugger became synonymous with the "hepcat," a swing addict.² *Sing, Sing, Sing*, however, was not a pat reproduction of the jitterbug. Cole had captured and distilled its energetic spirit. He codified its movement, disciplined its form, tamed and readied it for the stage.

The postwar period saw a radical transformation in American jazz dance as the steady and danceable rhythms of 1930s swing gave way to the dissonant harmonics and frenzied rhythmic shifts of 1940s bebop. A postwar federal tax on dance floors closed down most big ball-

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rooms and the big swing bands that played them were eclipsed. The fading of swing bands instigated a virtual blackout of jazz dance in its traditional form of tap dancing on the popular stage. Many vaudeville houses converted into movie theaters. Popular tastes on Broadway turned from tap dance to ballet. And jazz musicians moved into small clubs, playing a new and virtually undanceable style of jazz called bebop.

Lindy Hoppers at the Savoy Ballroom by the late 1940s danced the jitterbug to the frenzied tempos of a bebop-inflected swing, as well as other popular dances including the mambo, rumba, and cha-cha-cha, fueled by the Cuban migration into New York. To combat the near impossibility of dancing to the schizophrenic tempos of bop, Savoy dancers slowed their movements down to half-time, absorbing into their undulating bodies the percussions that were formerly reserved for the feet.³ Jazz tap dancer “Baby” Laurence Jackson matched the speed of bebop with taps that were explosions, machine-gun rattles, and jarring thumps—and then moved these rhythms from the feet up, playing his body like a percussion instrument. On the concert stage (and quite apart from the jazz scene) the sinuous upper-body movements of Asadata Dafora, a native of Sierra Leone, soared free over the drum rhythms of the accompaniment and his rapid-beating feet. These dancers were the progenitors of a “modern” style of jazz dance in which rhythms, previously reserved for the feet, were absorbed and reshaped in the body.

Sing, Sing, Sing is an early example of this “modern” jazz dance. “I remember him [at the Rainbow Room]” Walter Terry wrote about Cole, “doing not only the oriental dances to jazz, but also Harlem dances, in brown chinos with bare feet and bare torso. He must have been the first to use Harlem rhythms that weren’t done in terms of tap” (Loney 1983, 42).

Jack Cole—white, Catholic, and from New Brunswick, New Jersey—was a dance artist who was feared, misinterpreted, and often misunderstood. Because he performed in nightclubs, his work was often dismissed as being merely commercial. Wrote John Martin:

In the type of dance he has created for nightclubs...he has no opportunity to concern himself with content and substance, but if he were really to turn his head to the creation of a ballet or serious repertory of the concert field, his almost fanatical concentration and creative power would probably result in some pretty staggering things. (Martin 1948)

Descriptions of Cole’s dance style are nebulous. Margaret Lloyd’s was that “Hindu-Swing is his own invention, stylized Boogie Woogie a specialty, and formalizations of Caribbean and South American rhythms his trademark” (1943). Reconstructions of Cole’s dances distort impressions of his style. From Deborah Jowitt thirty years later: “Cole strikes me as immensely aggressive; almost every gesture is delivered with maximum force” (Jowitt 1976). Cole, furthermore, has been heralded as the “Father of Modern Jazz Dance.” As Matt Mattox claims, “I learned his style of dance, which leaned toward modern as well as going in his own direction, and which I refer to as jazz dance—*real* jazz dance” (Mattox 1980). But that, too, was a title Cole would have abhorred and blatantly rejected. “The idea that some people have that I am in some way responsible for the ‘modern jazz dance’ movement of today is in itself a distortion,” Cole wrote in an article in which he exploded on the subject of modern jazz dance (Cole 1963).

Titles notwithstanding, *Sing, Sing, Sing*—in its eclectic mix of American modern and African-American social dance forms and classical East Indian dance technique, and danced to the rhythms of swing in the tempos of bop—is illustrative of a postwar style of modern jazz dance that would be emulated by choreographers of the concert and musical stage, commercialized in the Hollywood musical film, and codified into a dance technique that would to this day be taught to jazz and musical theater dancers. I will explore the origins and influences of this style of modern jazz dance.

In 1934, one year after Prohibition came to an end, Cole left the concert world of modern dance for Manhattan's Embassy Club, a cabaret run by mobster Dutch Schultz. At twenty-one years old, he had already trained from the age of sixteen with Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn at Denishawn, danced with Ted Shawn's Male Dancers (1930–1933), and performed with the Doris Humphrey–Charles Weidman dance group.⁴ Cole's act at the Embassy with partner and former Denishawn dancer Alice Dudley, borrowed the same formula of lush costumes and exotic renditions of dances from the Far East that had made Denishawn so appealing to popular audiences. Although some diners were annoyed by the sounds of bare feet slapping against the polished stage floor, Cole—determined to make “art dance” palatable to blasé supperclub habitués—stopped his audience from eating and drinking through the sheer intensity and variety of moods he evoked in each of his dances. *Appassionette* had violent and decadent jerking and posturing; *Dance for a Pack of Hungry Cannibals* “interpreted” oriental rhythms⁵; *Japanese Lanterns*, a solo for Cole, was inspired by Ted Shawn's *Japanese Spear Dance* (1919); and *Love Dance* offered interpretations of Bali. Exotic to its core, Cole's club work won him critical acclaim.

By the late 1930s, Cole began an intensive study of “authentic” East Indian dance with the American-born dancer La Meri, who states, “From me he wanted the *adavus* of classical Bharata Natyam, and these I gave him” (La Meri 1984, 18). Cole mastered the technique—the cobra head movements, undulating arms, subtle hip-shoulder isolations, precise “mudra” hand gestures, and darting eye actions. Then, without changing a beat or a line of the classical lexicon, he wove them into intricate routines and danced them to swing music. *Swing Impressions of an East Indian Play Dance*, which Cole performed with partners Florence Lessing and Anna Austin, used the big-band swing arrangements of Larry Clinton and Raymond Scott. Hindu-Swing? It seemed outrageous, but Cole was dead serious. According to Shirada Narghis, “Exponents of Natya generally refuse to depart from the original purity of altering the essential standards of performance. An exception is Jack Cole, who performs authentic Indian dance technique to swing tempos without losing the general dignity of the art” (Narghis 1945, 10).

The strict discipline of Bharata Natyam technique enabled Cole to tilt, shift, and isolate the head, shoulders, ribs, and hips into dozens of small, sharp changes of direction. It was a powerful tool to rivet focus as well as to sexually titillate his audience. He commanded attention, not only through strong physical actions, but also by doing nothing. Florence Lessing says, “We walked a bit, stood or sat, but we never lost eye contact. There was a very intense, personal thing going on that held the audience” (Loney 1984, 79).

In 1939 Cole formed Ballet Intime with dancers Ernestine Day, Letitia Ide, Fe Alf, George Bockman, and Eleanor King, as his ethnic tastes spread to the Caribbean and Latin America. *West Indian Impressions*, danced to Cole Porter's “Begin the Beguine,” threw the attention to Cole's slow-grinding hips doing his version of the Cuban rumba. And *Babalu*, one of his so-

called Latin Impressions,⁶ borrowed the arched stance and rapid-tapping heels of flamenco dance.

In 1942, Cole's melting pot of "ethnic impressions" shifted from Spain and Cuba to Spanish Harlem U.S.A. *Wedding of a Solid Sender*, performed at the Rainbow Room to Benny Goodman's "Yes, Indeed," characterized wartime zoot-suiters as young, urban, black and Hispanic gangsters. The dance saw Cole strutting tough in a sharkskin suit with big shoulders and wide lapels, the whole of it vibrating with bold, vertical stripes. As the hero, Cole danced the role of the Solid Sender, a "Hep Cat of the First Water" who, not able to pass through the pearly gates of matrimony, is pronounced a "Square." Tap dancer Leticia Jay wrote that *Wedding of a Solid Sender* was "the first modern jazz dancing" she had ever seen: "It employed the principles of sharp dynamics and clarity of line characteristic of Bharata Natyam technique, without in any way suggesting East Indian type of dance" (Loney 1984, 85).

Although during this period Cole was reportedly concerned with "choreographic accounts of Negro life based on newspaper clippings and works of promised sociological import" (Dzhermolinska 1942, 28), it is more likely that his Harlem impressions, like *Reefer Man* and *Reefer Joint, 4:00 A.M.*, came from his midnight jaunts to Harlem dance halls and nightspots. As for the flashy splits and acrobatic knee slides that became Cole's movement signature, he quite possibly saw them performed by such class, flash, and acrobatic tap dance acts as the Nicholas Brothers and the Berry Brothers at the uptown and downtown Cotton Club in the 1930s and 1940s.

What is ironic about Cole's evolving style during the mid-1940s is that it was neither pure Harlem nor pure Hindu, and fit into no easy category. Transcriptions of Harlem nightlife and social dances were not intended as veracious pictures but were instead used as springboards for his own creative output. John Martin said, "He is not of the ballet, yet the technique he has established is probably the strictest and the most spectacular. He is not an orthodox 'modern dancer,' for though his movement is extremely individual it employs objective material from the Orient, from the Caribbean, from Harlem" (Martin 1948). The materials of Cole's jazz style can best be seen in the daily routine he subjected his dancers to in Hollywood during this period as resident director of the first permanent "house ballet troupe"⁷ at Columbia Pictures. Working six hours a day, six days a week, the company began with Humphrey-Weidman-styled stretching and strengthening exercises on the floor, and progressed to the drilling of routines in Cole's so-called Indian, Latin, and swing styles. La Meri taught Bharata Natyam technique, and a so-called jazz expert was brought in each afternoon to teach tap dance. When a major studio strike in 1946 brought film productions to a halt, cancelling the renewal of dancers' contracts, Cole took his show on the road with many of his Columbia Pictures dancers, who included Florence Lessing, Rod Alexander, Carol Haney, Buzz Miller, and Gwen Verdon.

"Jack Cole and His Dancers" opened at Chicago's Chez Paree in January 1947 with a program of four dances: two East Indian and two Afro-Cuban. It was in Chicago that Cole began to work on a "swing dance" for himself and three men, using the Benny Goodman Big Band's 1937 recording of "Sing, Sing, Sing."

The week Cole opened at the Latin Quarter in New York (the last week of March 1947), Ragini Devi presented a program of Hindu and Afro-Cuban dances at her Indian Dance Theatre, Letitia performed Hindu, Balinese, Siamese, Burmese, Javanese, and modern dances at the Barbizon Plaza Theatre, La Meri created a Hindu version of *Swan Lake* that was pre-



Al Hirschfeld's drawing of a zoot-suited Jack Cole captures the jazz dancing style of Jack Cole in the forties. © Hirschfeld.

sented at the Ethnologic Dance Center, and Mura Dehn's show "Masters of Jazz" (which included Al Minns and Willie Posie [aka Leon James]) was seen in a program of traditional jazz dances (*Evolution of Lindy, Shim Sham, and Lonesome Blues*). One had only to go to the Latin Quarter for "The First Cafe Appearance of Jack Cole and His Company" to encounter translations of these ethnic dance forms in one show.

Cole opened with a suite of East Indian dances, performed by Florence Lessing and an ensemble of six to a jazz arrangement, and closed with a suite of Latin American dances to a Latin-swing arrangement. Sandwiched in between was the premiere of *Sing, Sing, Sing*, "a dance of jitterbug derivation" (Terry 1947a) performed by Cole and an all-male trio⁸ to a small-band arrangement of the tune recorded in 1937 by the Benny Goodman Big Band. The opening was electrifying—a flashy drum solo in the style of Gene Krupa introduced three male dancers, dressed in brown suits and porkpie hats, and the dapperly clad Cole as the star soloist.

There is a Labanotated score of *Sing, Sing, Sing* that was prepared by Billie Mahoney for the American Dance Machine's "Jack Cole: Interface" project (American Dance Machine, 1976).⁹ The score for seven dancers is based on the recollections of Cole dancers Bob Hamilton, Buzz Miller, and Gwen Verdon, all of whom took part in the Interface project. Although the Labanotated score for *Sing, Sing, Sing* is not complete—Buzz Miller said "No one could remember it all at the American Dance Machine, the score wasn't complete" (Miller 1992)—sections of the dance that were notated, along with an accompanying Glossary, are extremely valuable in discerning Cole's evolving jazz style.

The opening of the Labanotated score for *Sing, Sing, Sing* has the chorus of six (three women and three men) moving in unison with long-gliding jazz walks and riff walks. (A riff walk, from tap dance, is a step making four sounds on the toe-ball-heel, with a final accent on the ball of the foot.) Whether moving in single file along the diagonal or gliding past each other on their own horizontal paths, the lines are straight, the turns sharp, the curving spatial designs as precise as the inner workings of a clock. From glides to running slides, they suddenly "stop on a dime" to frame the entrance of the male soloist, who dances a stylized Lindy as the chorus keeps time by snapping fingers and slapping thighs.

One section of the score, noted "Basie Vamp" (an obvious reference to Count Basie and His Orchestra, one of the leading swing big bands that played the Savoy Ballroom, "Home of the Lindy Hop"), begins with three male dancers moving downstage in a triangular unit, strutting and snapping, gliding and sliding and altogether replicating, in sound and percussive gesture, the parts of the snare, tom-tom, and bass of a drum set. As the tempo accelerates, the men and soloist (this would have been Cole in the 1947 *Sing, Sing, Sing*) make a group of four to form a square, strutting in slow motion around three female dancers. Riding over the measures of the music, the women make small and sharp isolations in staccato, accenting the steady four-beat with offbeat jerks of the head, ribs, and hips. Then all of them burst into jitterbug solos, moving from catch steps and snapped kicks in place to lateral gallops and weaving crossover steps, pivot turns, and slides across the floor.¹⁰

In the finale of *Sing, Sing, Sing*, the group moves downstage in unison. With isolations reminiscent of East Indian technique, they fuse small, tight pulses and tilts of the head, shoulders, and chest with loose-legged shimmies and kicks, as arms circle in and out in figure-eight shapes. They create, in effect, a polyrhythmic drumming orchestra.

The layering, juxtaposition, and counterpoint in this last section of *Sing, Sing, Sing* invites comparison to Asadata Dafora in *African Dance Festival*, a concert presented at Carnegie Hall in 1943, about which Edwin Denby wrote:

Dafora only now and then called attention to his percussive foot beats. Though they were continuous, you watched the upper part of his body, the brilliantly rapid, darting, or sinuous arms, the strangely mobile shoulders, the slight shift of the torso.... The way he phrased the rhythmic patterns in these movements and so heightened the meaning of the dance resembles the way a blues singer phrases her song and heightens its meaning against the steady beat of the orchestra. (Denby 1986, 184)

As Dafora was concertizing traditional West African dance forms, so Cole was making art dances using materials from the African-American vernacular. Also like Dafora, whose dance rhythms soared freely over the drum rhythms of the accompaniment and over his own steady foot beats, Cole played intricate body rhythms over the steady propulsions of swing. There is another aspect of Cole's performance that resonates African, which Jerome Robbins articulates in describing the variants of Cole's style:

Packed into [Cole's] body were fierce discipline, controlled furies, exuberant sexiness, immaculate clarity, athletic ardor....His movements, though rhythmically and kinetically complex, were exceptionally clear to the eye, spectacular whether gigantic or minuscule, tight without being restrictive, tense without being full of tension. (Robbins 1984, 115)

Put simply, the high degree of control in Cole's movement was aligned with a cool detachment in his performing style.

The use of "cool" in English is a basic reference to "moderation in coldness" extended metaphorically to include "composure under fire," and implies a state of calmness, especially in times of stress. The West African meaning of cool denotes the ability to be nonchalant at the right moment, and places value on the ability to do difficult tasks with an air of ease. Dancers are admired for their cool, detached expressions when they dance. "Manifest within this philosophy of the 'cool,' Robert Farris Thompson explains, "is the belief that the purer or cooler a person becomes, the more ancestral he becomes...mastery of self enables a person to transcend time and elude preoccupation...to concentrate upon truly important matters of social balance and aesthetic substance, creative matters full of motion and brilliance" (Thompson 1983, 41).

John Martin recognized the control and detachment in Cole's performing style when he wrote that Cole was "not afraid of the floor, of falling or sliding on foot or knee or back. But for all his prodigious expenditure, he always has a smoldering reserve of energy." The Cole dancer was "a depersonalized being, an intense, kinetic entity rather than an individual" (Martin 1948). This "mask of coolness," denoting a sense of purpose and self-control, concentration and transcendence, is the mask that Cole donned in performance. It was not a mask of cold detachment. For Cole, the essence of his jazz dance was the passion that was released through being totally engaged in the act of moving. Wrote Cole, "The ballet kids, with their

dedication to and orientation toward linear designs, do the whole thing from the outside; they assume feeling. It [jazz dance] seems to require a less formal person...someone more concerned with individual expression" (Cole 1963). From behind the mask of cool, the Cole dancer riveted every ounce of concentration on the preciseness of the movement, consumed in a state of technical preparedness that amounted almost to possession. With the dancer's face quieted and concentration on the immaculate precision of a movement, the rhythms that were being subtly played in the body were brought into greater relief. Cole's dances, as Walter Terry observed, had "both the power and the ritualized quality of an incantational rite, apparent in many tribal dances of Africa" (Terry 1947a).

It can also be argued that Cole's mask of cool derived from East Indian sources as well as from his own immense powers of concentration, which had been sharpened from his intense study of world dance forms, many of them classical. But no matter from where in the world the raw materials of Cole's dance movement was absorbed, borrowed, or appropriated, *Sing, Sing, Sing* was a quintessential American jazz dance expression—because of the way it was danced to jazz music (in Cole's words, "Jazz dance is anything that is danced to jazz music, so long as the movement corresponds in style"). Although "Sing, Sing, Sing" was a straight-ahead swing tune (its rhythm giving equal weight to the four beats of the bar, with a forward-moving propulsion imparted to each note through the manipulation of the timbre, attack, vibrato, and intonation), Cole's choreography was Bop-inflected in terms of its attitude, dynamic, and movement style. He creatively played off the two rhythmic feels of swing and bop. While swing was played in medium tempo, Cole (like bop musicians) both slowed down and sped up the beats in his phrases. Where choirs of instruments in the big swing band harmonized, bop musicians played in unison, as did Cole's dancers. Over the screeching and serene dynamics of swing, Cole's movement, like bop's melodic lines, was lightning-quick and compact. To the steady four-four rhythm of swing that chugged along like a steady locomotive, Cole contrasted with phrasings that allowed for more complex accents. He himself was not a bebop dancer—few were. The frenetic tempos of bebop made dancing to it too restrictive. But Cole had the temperament of a bebop musician. As Martin observed, "His art was strictly high-tension; nervous, gaunt, flagellant, yet with an opulent sensuous beauty that sets up a violent crosscurrent of conflict at its very source" (Martin 1948). More important, the manner in which Cole's East Indian and Latin American movement rhythms were "played" over swing created a crosscurrent of rhythmic textures that was certainly bebop in feel.

For Cole, bebop was an aesthetic: it was an attitude that expressed itself in Cole's habit of language and movement behavior. Cole's swing choreographies adapted the attitude of the hipster—the wise guy who knew what was under the surface of things. Hipness was a silent knowingness, and the hipster knew how the levers were pulled: he said nothing, however, but kept his cool, he eschewed anything that smacked of emotionalism. "The hipster was sophisticated, in the sense that his emotions appeared to be anaesthetized. His face was a mask and few things moved him" (Stearns 1956, 223). Cole was well acquainted with the hipster, from his zoot-suited "hepcats" in *Wedding of a Solid Sender* to *Sing, Sing, Sing*'s strutting street men in dapper suits and porkpie hats. In that dance, Cole himself played the quintessential hipster, looking strikingly similar to Marshall Stearns' description of the hipster as "the jitterbug of the thirties in a Brooks Brother suit and a crew-cut" (Stearns 1956, 159).

Cole's *Sing, Sing, Sing*, then, descends from an unbroken line of African-American vernacular dance, from the Strut (Cole's basic Jazz Walk), Grind, and Texas Tommy (forerunner of the Lindy Hop), to boogie woogie, jitterbug, and jive. Still, *Sing, Sing, Sing* was not "pure" Harlem dance. Cole's choreography was informed by East Indian, Latin American, and Caribbean musical traditions and dance forms, as well as by the modern American dance traditions of Denishawn and Humphrey-Weidman. I am not sure that Cole should be hailed the "Father of Modern Jazz Dance"—what a dubious distinction to father the mongrel hybrid of a dance that was postwar jazz. But Cole's extraordinary, although highly idiosyncratic, contribution to the jazz continuum is how he played the movement rhythms of Indian Bharata Natyam, Cuban rumba, and American jitterbug over and against jazz swing. Strutting in slow motion, sliding over the measure, pulsing in double and triple time, flick-kicking off the beat, and snapping out precision-timed isolations to the beat, Cole drummed the body. Dancing the jitterbug in a Brooks Brothers suit, his hair crew-cut, Cole's updated and cooled-down movement aesthetic distinguished "modern" jazz dance from anything that had come before it.

Notes

1. "Sing, Sing, Sing," written by Louis Prima and arranged by Jimmy Mundy, was recorded by Benny Goodman and his Orchestra, July 6, 1937; the musicians included Goodman on clarinet and Gene Krupa on drums.
2. Joseph Mazo (1992) wrote that the "driving athleticism of the Lindy was an expression of self and of creativity for people who did not live on the same scale as F. Scott Fitzgerald's self-destructive heroes and heroines." Walter Terry suggested that Cole had somehow harnessed the frenzied jitterbug into a kind of jitterbug incantation: "Actions expand in pattern and dynamics, mirroring the generation of self-induced, hypnotic passion. Thus it resembles, while retaining American form, the Egyptian zakir and numerous other dances of personal ecstasy" (Terry 1947b).
3. In Mura Dehn's documentary film *The Spirit Moves* (Dehn ca. 1950), Jeff Asquew and LeRoy Appins's dancing of "Bebop Time" at the Savoy Ballroom in the 1950s gives the clearest example of rhythms from jazz tap being absorbed up into the body.
4. Concurrent with performing with the Humphrey-Weidman dance group (where he took classes and slept in the studio), Cole was studying classical ballet with Luigi Albertieri.
5. Descriptions of *Dance for a Pack of Hungry Cannibals* are so scanty, it is impossible to know which "oriental rhythms" Cole was attempting to interpret.
6. During this time, Cole studied flamenco dance by day and frequented rumba clubs with Florence Lessing by night. Lessing says she first met Cole at Paco Cansino's Spanish dance class: "He was twirling a shiny red cape, which looked flammable, while smoking a cigarette." In Grey (1990, 22).
7. The group of dancers at Columbia were selected and trained by Cole and under studio contract to work on such films as *Cover Girl*, *Tonight and Every Night*, *Eadie Was a Lady*, and *Tars and Spars*.
8. According to Walter Terry's review (1947a) of the Latin Quarter opening, *Sing, Sing, Sing* was performed by Cole and three male dancers, while John Martin (1947) reported that it was performed by an all-male quintet. The American Dance Machine's reconstruction of the dance had

seven dancers, three women and four men. Buzz Miller says, "It was done originally just for boys...when I joined the group in 1948, it was danced by boys and girls" (Miller 1992).

9. In 1976 the American Dance Machine's "Jack Cole: Interface Project," under the direction of Lee Theodore, attempted to reconstruct Cole's choreography and technique by bringing together members of his company, including Bob Hamilton, Buzz Miller, Ethel Martin, Gwen Verdon, and Rod Alexander. From their recollections, Cole's *In a Persian Garden*, *Macumba*, and *Sing, Sing, Sing* were taught to a group of selected dancers. In addition, the reconstruction of these dances, plus a Glossary of Cole's style, was committed to a Labanotated score and compiled by Billie Mahoney. The observations I make about Cole's choreographic style in *Sing, Sing, Sing* come from a reading of the score, registered with the Dance Notation Bureau.
10. The Glossary in Mahoney's Labanotated score for *Sing, Sing, Sing* made stylistic clarifications of the two core movements of Cole's jazz vocabulary, the Jazz Walk and Lindy Step. In the Jazz Walk, the carriage of the body is vertical and lifted, with the chest placed forward-high into a lifted but unforced arch; the feet root strongly in parallel position. A basic "jazz pulse" in the rib cage underlies all the walks; like a metronome, it keeps basic time in the torso. Although the movement is barely noticeable, the body, whether in stillness or in motion, is never without an internal pulse. The Jazz Walk, in which each step forward passes through fifth position onto the ball of the foot and onto a straight leg, is a Strut—one of the most basic steps from the African-American vernacular. The basic Lindy Step consists of a right step-touch-step, left ball-touch-ball step, right cross back-step, and incorporates a Charleston-style flick-kick. This basic step appears in a Lindy pattern in measure 44 of the Labanotated score and combines the detailing of a basic Lindy step with a basic pulse, chainé turn, and kick-ball-chain step. While the torso in Cole's jazz style is vertical, with almost no isolated movement in the hips, there is a looseness in the outer extremities: limp "puppy-dog" wrists, kicks that flick, arm gestures that are flung and that take on the same quality of the jitterbug's "break-away" moves.

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