

# Chicago Tribune

Sunday, August 25, 1985



Doing the "Shim-Sham" at a recent Changing Times revue: Ernest Brown [from left], Leroy Meyers, "Bubba" Gaines, Phace Roberts, Honi Coles, Jane Goldberg, Marion Coles and Louis Simms.

## 'Janie Tappleseed' on a mission to spread the joy of happy tapping feet

By Deborah Leigh Wood

**J**ane Goldberg is married to tap dancing. The wedding took place 12 years ago, when she first saw "Carefree," a classic Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers film. Since then, she has brought into the entertainment world an offspring called the Changing Times Tap Dancing Company.

The five-year-old troupe opens the Goodman Theatre's Merrill Lynch Dance Series Sept. 3-15 with "Shoot Me While I'm Happy: An Evening of Jazz Tap Dancing" and performs at 4 p.m. Sept. 1 at the Chicago Jazz Festival in Grant Park.

Changing Times is truly a child of matrimonial tradition. It incorporates something old: time-honored tap dance steps;

Something new: Goldberg, 37, and contemporaries Diane Walker and Sarah Safford, modern steps and a plot on which to hang the musical numbers;

Something borrowed: Charles ["Cookie"] Cook, Ernest ["Brownie"] Brown and Jimmy Payne, hallowed hoofers from Chicago;

And something blues: the soul of tap, an art form whose time has come and gone and come back again in a limited fashion.

Tap's resurgence in popularity is due not only to the work of Gregory Hines in the film "The Cotton Club" and Tommy Tune in the Broadway musical "My One and Only," but to Goldberg as well. The former East Coast dance critic from Washington, D.C., studied the feet of the masters and then started a newsletter, festival and company featuring these dancing gurus.

"My mission," she says, "is to preserve, promote and perform a popular and populist form of dance." For this she

has been tagged "Janie Tappleseed," a name that sits well on her self-described short, zaftig frame.

"I'm no spring chicken," she says of her Janie-come-lately entry into a dance form often considered antiquated and—worse still—quaint by its detractors.

Like jazz, tap sprang from the souls of American blacks. It was considered a happy-go-lucky dance form that flourished in the Depression. Its association with barren economic times and supposed unsophistication pushed it out of favor in the prosperous be-

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'We're not part of a revival. . . . A revival implies dancers stopped dancing.'

—Jane Goldberg

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