

301 CLASS Scripts for Voiceover

301intro

Welcome to Dance 301 - Swing Era Dancing, at CP Swing Big Band Ballroom.

This class is produced by 2LDance.org

We begin our look at the Swing Era with the opening of the Savoy.

In the heart of the Harlem night club district.

301break

3Wsavoyb SAVOY Setup

3WsavoyF,B,L,R,X(floor),Y(ceiling)

March 26, 1926 was the opening of the World's Finest Ballroom, the Savoy. In the heart of the Harlem night club district, the Savoy stretched an entire city block along Lenox Avenue at 140th Street. Four thousand packed the place opening night, with two thousand turned away. The dance floor, known as "The Track" among dancers, faced a double bandstand that could handle two bands at the same time. That meant continuous music and non-stop dancing. From the very first night, the joint was jumping every night of the week.

[song exerpt]

The Savoy was heaven for dancers. The Lindy Hop was born here, with Whitey's Lindy Hoppers becoming international ambassadors of swing. The Savoy "NO Discrimination" policy resulted in a crowd from fifteen to fifty percent white, unlike the "Whites Only" Cotton Club nearby. Both black and white bands could play the Savoy, and many did. Chick Webb led the Savoy House Band featuring Ella Fitzgerald singing. With an explosion of Lindy Hop, Jitterbug and Jive, the Savoy opens our look into the Birth of Swing.

March 26, 1926 - July 10, 1958

World's Finest Ballroom

Lenox Ave at 140-141 Street

City block long; entire second floor "The Track"

Luxury ballroom modeled after downtown's Roseland Ballroom

10,000 square feet handled 4000 people; 700,000 per year

Lana Turner: "What happy feet these people have." Became "Home of Happy Feet"

Home of Whitey's Lindy Hoppers and the Harvest Moon Ball (1935)

Nightly dance competitions and performances; New Car Giveaway every Saturday night

Lindy (1927) Jitterbug, Flying Charleston, Jive, Snakehips, Rhumboogie and local Shimmy

Savoy Hostesses 25cents per dance. (Roseland's visited Savoy on their night off)

ALWAYS NO DISCRIMINATION policy (unlike Cotton Club next door)

85%black, 15% white, sometimes 50-50; all that mattered was "can you dance?"

Double bandstand (one large and one medium band on east wall) for continuous music

Floor replaced every 3 years

Chick Webb house band leader, then Ella Fitzgerald (Apollo)

Savoy and Cotton Club were demolished to construct Bethune Towers/Delano Village.

A plaque stands there (2002)

Boxer Jack Johnson’s Club Deluxe was taken over by Gangster Owney Madden in 1923 and transformed into the Cotton Club, to provide “authentic black entertainment to a wealthy, whites-only audience.” The decor and shows depicted blacks as jungle savages or plantation darkies. Revues included dancers, singers, comedians, and variety acts, with house bands led by Fletcher Henderson, Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway and Jimmie Lunceford. The club gained popularity through radio broadcasts on NBC Red and WEA. The elaborate Cotton Club Parade Show of 1934 featured the use of dry ice for the first time, for the song Ill Wind performed by Adelaide Hall.

[EXERPT from Ill Wind; trigger panel change to Singer, song, racial backstory]

[TRIGGER final CC Slides]

Although a slight accommodation was made to allow Duke Ellington entry as a customer, the Cotton Club remained staunchly segregated until it closed in 1936 when race riots broke out in Harlem. Re-opened in midtown that year, it was never the same and closed in 4 years. But The Cotton Club lives on in the movies and memories it created.

SONG(S):

DigaDigaDoo - Duke Ellington 1928

Cab Calloway rose to stardom at the Cotton Club, with his name blazed in oversized neon outside. With classy dance routines and glorious costumes, Cab’s shows drove the Club to the height of its success. One of Cab’s songs coined the popular name for the swing dancers that scurried all over the dance floor: Jitterbugs.

3VcottoC

Jitterbug - Cab Calloway

Notes ++++++

Lenox and 142nd 1923-1935; (1936-1940 midtown after riots in 36)

Whites-only but featured Cab Calloway, Fletcher Henderson, Duke Ellington, Count Basie...

Gangster Owney Madden took over Jack Johnson’s Club Deluxe, and created Cotton Club to provide "an authentic black entertainment to a wealthy, whites-only audience."

keeping Johnson as the “manager.”

Blacks were often depicted as jungle savages or plantation darkies

Cotton Club REVUES featured dancers, singers, comedians and variety acts, with a house band.

FIRST house band: Fletcher Henderson 1923

Duke Ellington 1927-1931

Cab Calloway 1931

Jimmie Lunceford 1934

Radio Broadcasts on NBC Red WEAJ (1929)

Cotton Club Parade 1934 Show - 600K customers in 8 months.

Dry-ice fog machine for Ill Wind (1st)

When race riots broke out in Harlem 1936, CC Closed and re-opened for a few years in midtown.

The Birth of the Swing Era: Benny Goodman at the Palomar Ballroom 8/21/1935

Swing dance music had been popular in black clubs or played by black musicians as early as the 1920s. White bands saw fans turning out to dance and started playing it too. By the 1930s, clubs and bands, both white and colored, were swing dancing everywhere and at the top of the charts was Benny Goodman.

In 1935, Benny Goodman took his orchestra West to play the Palomar Ballroom (outside Los Angeles). He was not sure what kind of music the local dance kids would respond to. Benny's Trio and Orchestra had become popular on the East coast through radio broadcasts of some live performances. One in particular was a weekly show, "Let's Dance." On this show, Benny played many of the arrangements by Atlanta Bandleader Fletcher Henderson that had propelled the band to the top of the East Coast swing dance scene. But Benny's band often went on the air as late as midnight, New York time. Did anybody on the West Coast stay up for that?

[King Porter Stomp]

When Benny opened that night at the Palomar, he decided to pass out charts for the older, conventional songs, afraid Henderson's arrangements would be too much for the large crowd that packed the hall. Through the first set, the band got a lukewarm response. Dancers did not come to dance to *these* tunes.

During the break, drummer Gene Krupa told Benny and the band, "If we're gonna die, Benny, let's die playing our own thing."

They went back out playing the "hot" charts from Fletcher Henderson... and the crowd went wild.

The swing dance craze was coast-to-coast.

The Era of Swing had officially begun.

[Sing, Sing, Sing]

Video montage Sing Sing Sing (last song) <https://youtu.be/I8aEY9IONk>

3Wbillie Billie Holiday at the Apollo Theatre

The Apollo Theater has been, and continues to be, the most famous performance venue associated with black entertainers. Converted from all-white Burlesque in 1934, the black-oriented Apollo emerged in a neighborhood that was rapidly becoming “colored.” In those first years, the Apollo Amateur Night became a big hit, with a \$25 prize. Ella Fitzgerald won her \$25 at age 17. Billie Holiday won hers too, and went on to hits like this.

3WbilliB Part II

Billie Holliday’s storied career reached the highest highs, and the lowest lows as she struggled with hard drug abuse. Her story should always mention her shocking song about the high price of racism and segregation in the South. Strange Fruit brought the issue vividly into the minds of many Americans in a way they could not ignore.

Battle of the Bands
Showdown at the Savoy
Sunday, January 16, 1938

3Wbattle voiceover

After Benny Goodman's history making performance at Carnegie Hall, many of the band members went uptown to the Savoy, where the greatest Battle of the Bands ever was being held. It was the Savoy house band, Chick Webb (with Ella Fitzgerald singing) versus the much better-known Count Basie Orchestra (with Billie Holliday and James Rushing singing.) Dancers at The Track had been anticipating this Sunday show-down for months. Hundreds were turned away from the packed hall, with crowds blocking traffic on the streets. Could Basie's band be the first to cut Chick Webb and become king? They battled back and forth all night on the two Savoy stages. Count Basie seemed to take an early lead...

[3Soneocl]

3Wbattl2 interim voiceover

Basie's groove would be hard to beat, and there are some who said his band had won. In the crowd that night were Gene Krupa, Lionel Hampton, Red Norvo, Eddie Duchin, Duke Ellington, and other band leaders and performers. But, the house band was beloved at the Savoy, and by the end of the night, Chick Webb's Orchestra had officially cut Basie out to retain the title.

3Ecarneg Benny Goodman at Carnegie Hall 1/16/1938

When Benny Goodman booked Carnegie Hall for a Swing and Jazz concert, it was the first of its kind. Carnegie was the realm of fine opera and orchestra - not swing kids. Benny had taken the young people by storm but making an impression on the world was a big responsibility.

Benny's band and trio were filled with fantastic musicians and future bandleaders, and he brought Count Basie and his band with him. Benny planned a showcase of Swing History, including buying a new Fletcher Henderson arrangement of Blue Moon for this show.

Exerpt: Blue Moon (from the movie's recreation of it)

The finale of that history-making concert was the highlight of the show, an extended jam on the 1930 Gershwin hit: I Got Rhythm. The solos feature Gene Krupa on drums, Harry James on trumpet, Lionel Hampton on vibes, Jess Stacy on piano, and Harry Goodman rolling on bass. Two of our CP Swing All Stars were there with Count Basie's band: Lester Prez Young on sax, and Walter Big'un Page on bass. Recordings of this concert became one of the first to sell over a million copies. Released several times over the years, it is the most listened-to swing concert of all time.

Here is that incredible jam.

I Got Rhythm - Carnegie Hall 1938

The Benny Goodman Orchestra:

Benny Goodman, clarinet, vocal, and leader

Chris Griffin, Ziggy Elman, Harry James, trumpets

Red Ballard, Vernon Brown, trombones

George Koenig, Art Rollini, Babe Russin, Hymie Schertzer, reed instruments

Jess Stacy, piano

Teddy Wilson, piano (BG trio and quartet only)

Lionel Hampton, vibraphone (BG quartet only)

Allan Reuss, guitar

Harry Goodman, bass

Gene Krupa, drums

Martha Tilton, vocal

Additional personnel:

Buck Clayton, trumpet

Bobby Hackett, cornet

Cootie Williams, trumpet

Harry Carney, baritone saxophone
Johnny Hodges, soprano and alto saxophones
Lester Young, tenor saxophone
Count Basie, piano
Freddie Green, guitar
Walter Page, bass

- 1.) Benny Goodman & His Orchestra: Don't Be That Way [0:00](#)
- 2.) Benny Goodman & His Orchestra: Sometimes I'm Happy [4:25](#)
- 3.) Benny Goodman & His Orchestra: One O'Clock Jump [8:36](#)
- 4.) Benny Goodman Dixieland Quintet: Sensation Rag [15:51](#)
- 5.) Benny Goodman 12-Piece Ensemble: I'm Coming Virginia [17:10](#)
- 6.) Benny Goodman Combo: When Baby Smiles At Me [19:21](#)
- 7.) Benny Goodman & His Orchestra: Shine [20:12](#)
- 8.) Benny Goodman Combo: Blue Reverie [21:20](#)
- 9.) Benny Goodman & His Orchestra: Life Goes To A Party [24:54](#)
- 10.) Benny Goodman 12-Piece Ensemble: Jam Session: Honeysuckle Rose [29:43](#)
- 11.) Benny Goodman Trio: Body And Soul [47:16](#)
- 12.) Benny Goodman Quartet: Avalon [50:51](#)
- 13.) Benny Goodman Quartet: The Man I Love [55:14](#)
- 14.) Benny Goodman Quartet: I Got Rhythm [58:42](#)
- 15.) Benny Goodman & His Orchestra: Blue Skies [1:03:23](#)
- 16.) Benny Goodman & His Orchestra: Loch Lomond [1:06:47](#)
- 17.) Benny Goodman & His Orchestra: Blue Room [1:10:53](#)
- 18.) Benny Goodman & His Orchestra: Swingtime In The Rockies [1:13:43](#)
- 19.) Benny Goodman & His Orchestra: Bei Mir Bist Du Schön [1:16:28](#)
- 20.) Benny Goodman Trio: China Boy [1:20:53](#)
- 21.) Benny Goodman Quartet: Stompin' At The Savoy [1:25:52](#)
- 22.) Benny Goodman Quartet: Dizzy Spells [1:31:56](#)
- 23.) Benny Goodman & His Orchestra: Sing Sing Sing (With A Swing) [1:38:13](#)
- 24.) Benny Goodman & His Orchestra: If Dreams Come True (Encore) [1:51:16](#)
- 25.) Benny Goodman & His Orchestra: Big John's Special (Encore) [1:54:11](#)