

## No Maps On My Taps and Company

A double-bill of jazz tap dancing—on screen and live

Sunday Evening, July 1, 1984, at 8:00  
Power Center for the Performing Arts  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

### PROGRAM

#### Part I

#### "No Maps On My Taps"

*a film featuring*

Howard (Sandman) Sims      Charles (Chuck) Green  
and Bunny Briggs

George T. Nierenberg, *Producer-Director*

"No Maps On My Taps" is a 60-minute, 16mm color film that offers unique insight into a dance form whose true heritage in black America was largely ignored in its Hollywood film popularization. The spirit of tap in its heyday, shown here in rare photos and film clips of the 1930s, provides a backdrop for intimate portraits of three remaining authentic "hoofers." The camera follows Sandman, Chuck, and Bunny as they reminisce and jive on the streets or rehearse for a challenge match on stage at Harlem's Small's Paradise. This extraordinary competition of talents is caught on film with exciting musical backing provided by Lionel Hampton and his big band.

### INTERMISSION

#### Part II

*An on-stage performance featuring*

Howard (Sandman) Sims      Charles (Chuck) Green  
and Leon Collins

Danny Holgate, *Musical Director and Pianist*

Zane Paul, *Clarinet and Saxophone*      Percy Brice, *Drums*  
Robert Troy, *Guitar*      Gary Leach, *Bass*

## About the Artists

**Howard "Sandman" Sims** never studied tap dancing — he "was born dancing." Brought up in Los Angeles in a dancing family and influenced by the Coast's Jack Williams, he moved to New York in 1946 to "develop and get seasoned." He appeared at Harlem's Apollo Theater for 17 years, first as a comedian and then as a dancer. In New York he met his idol and the major influence in his dancing, Chuck Green. Sandman has traveled throughout the world and danced with the big bands of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and Lionel Hampton. Sandman has his own specialty, the "sand dance," for which he received his nickname: "I was a boxer and used to dance in the rosin box. People enjoyed me dancing more in the rosin box than they did me boxing." He reproduced this effect with sand on a platform and turned it into a rhythmic wonder. Sandman is presently teaching tap to Ben Vereen. In television Sims has been featured in the special, "Uptown at the Apollo," and will appear this fall in another special, "Julie Andrews' *Invitation to the Dance*," with Rudolph Nureyev and Ann Reinking.

**Charles "Chuck" Green**, regarded as the reigning genius of the art, has been described as "The Bach of Tap" by *New York Times* critic Walter Kerr. Born in Fitzgerald, Georgia, he began dancing on a sidewalk in Atlanta. As a child, he formed with James Walker a comedy and tap team called "Chuck and Chuckles," a younger version of the renowned team, "Buck and Bubbles." At age nine Green went to New York, where he became the protege of master-hooper John Bubbles. "Chuck and Chuckles," one of the most popular dance-comedy teams in show business, broke up in the mid-1940s. In 1969 a tap revival got a boost with a series of "tap happenings," led by Green, who had reassembled some of his colleagues from Harlem's famous Hooper's Club. Just as Green's idol is John Bubbles, younger hoofers regard Green as the godfather of jazz tap. The film's title originated with Green: "Maps are full of roads and signs and detours and destinations . . . maps are full of limitations, but when I tap I can get lost dancing, I don't have no maps."

**Bunny Briggs**, often described by the late Duke Ellington as a "superleviathonic tapsthematiologist," started dancing at the age of five on Harlem street corners. He was a protege of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, but learned much of his stylistic elegance as a child, performing for "high society" with Lucky Roberts, the famous stride pianist. He frequently performed with the "Duke" in his Sacred Music Concerts at St. John the Divine, and with all the big bands, including Lionel Hampton, Earl Hines, and Count Basie. He is currently performing on the cruise ships, Doric, Oceanic, and Queen Elizabeth.

**Leon Collins'** dance career has encompassed performance, movie roles, and teaching. He has danced five years with the Jimmie Lunceford Band, and with other leading bands including those of Glenn Gray, Lucky Millinder, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and the Herb Pomeroy Band.

In the movies, he has appeared with Paul Newman in *The Verdict*, with Peter Falk in *The Brinks Job*, and played a blind dancer in *Walking On a Cloud*. He currently teaches tap at Harvard and Radcliffe.

**George T. Nierenberg** spent five years making *No Maps on My Taps* during which time he organized a series of live tap dance shows. As a filmmaker, he has sought to show important aspects of our culture that are in danger of disappearing. His film, *The Hollow* (1975), depicts an impoverished community in the Adirondack mountains, whose traditions are threatened by contemporary society. He is currently producing a new film on tap dancing and a film series on American ethnic traditions. The first film of the series was the critically acclaimed documentary on gospel singing, *Say Amen, Somebody* (1982).

The film shown this evening has won several awards: American Film Festival, Blue Ribbon; Chicago International Dance Film Festival, Bronze Hugo; 8th Annual Dance Video and Film Festival, Best Film; Filmex; Telluride Film Festival and Prix Italia.

**Danny Holgate**, *Musical Director and Pianist*, was musical supervisor and arranger for the Broadway shows *Eubie*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *Bubbling Brown Sugar*; musical director and arranger for *Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope*, and *Rainbow Jones*; and dance arranger for *Odyssey*, starring Yul Brynner. He has also arranged or conducted for such artists as Jerry Butler, Lena Horne, Alexis Smith, and Cab Calloway.

"*No Maps On My Taps and Company*" is booked and managed by Arthur Cantor, Inc., 33 West 60th Street, Penthouse, New York, NY 10023, telephone (212) 664-1290. For further information, write or call Harvey Elliott.