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Frankie Manning: Ambassador Of Lindy Hop



Synopsis

In the early days of swing dancing, Frankie Manning stood out for his moves and his innovative routines. This is his autobiography, recalling how his first years of dancing as a teenager at Harlem's Savoy Ballroom led to his becoming chief choreographer and a lead dancer for 'Whitey's Lindy Hoppers'. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

Frankie Manning spread swing dancing's popularity throughout the world while touring with Whitey's Lindy Hoppers in the 1930s and '40s. Dance writer and swing dancer Millman conducted extensive interviews with Manning for a vivid account of his career. Manning became a star in Harlem's popular Savoy Ballroom with his unique style, including dancing at a sharp angle to the ground like a track runner, speed and musicality. In a dance competition, Manning astonished the crowd with the first-ever Lindy aerial, or air step (where the man sends his partner flying). Later Manning toured with jazz greats such as Duke Ellington and Count Basie, and performed in several films, including *Everybody Sings* with Judy Garland. After a long hiatus from dancing, he was a consultant for Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* and coached a new generation of dancers in the swing dance revival of the '80s and '90s. While the first-person accounts of Manning's life capture his vibrancy, humor and charm, the narrative is interrupted by short sections of historical notes; their formality is at odds with Manning's ease and charisma. Still, this vivid memoir by one of swing dancing's innovators and stars is a must for lovers of dance, jazz and African-American history. 36 b&w illus. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Dance writer and swing dancer Millman conducted extensive interviews with Manning for a vivid account of his career... the first-person accounts of Manning's life capture his vibrancy, humor and charm...this vivid memoir by one of swing dancing's innovators and stars is a must for lovers of dance, jazz and African-American history." – Publishers Weekly

I'm a swing dancer (lindy hopper) and this book was so helpful and interesting. I didn't know about a lot of the origins of phrases we use now, or realize that certain people knew each other. The writing style is friendly and engaging; I would probably enjoy this book even if I weren't a dancer.

I was fortunate to have met Frankie twice before I read the book. This gave me the face and voice to put the words to. As I read, it was as if Frankie was there talking to me with all the wit, humor and charm he has in person. Frankie's excitement in telling his stories makes you wish you could have been there with him. Frankie does a wonderful job of taking you through his life experiences in a way that you just can't put the book down. For me the book is about much more than dancing Lindy Hop. It's about how to live your life which is finding your passion and becoming the best, not to become famous or rich, but because it gives you purpose and that gives others inspiration. Thanks for putting Frankie's life into words. He is someone I wish my kids, grand kids and all future generations could have met. I hope this book soon becomes a movie so all the world can once again see Frankie Manning on the dance floor.

This is a book every Lindy Swing Dancer should read. If you love Lindy, you should know the history, and most of all, know who Frankie Manning is!!!! I've bought one for each of my dance helpers as gifts of thank you. I got mine the day it was released!

As a friend of Frankie Manning, this is an excellent book to learn about Lindy Hop from the perspective of someone that helped start it all!

it was good, thanks :) enjoying the reading !

I have been a student and admirer of Frankie Manning's ever since my first dance lesson with him almost ten years ago. Frankie is a legendary dancer, an innovator and pioneer in the dance form called "Lindy Hop" that started in the Jazz Age in the streets of Harlem and continues to this day in

clubs, schools and dancehalls all over the world. I've been hearing Frankie tell his inspiring stories for a long time now, but never with this rich detail and the larger historical context provided by Ms. Millman to back them up. From his days as a child at rent parties to the heyday of the Savoy Ballroom to performing internationally with the dance troupe Whitey's Lindy Hoppers, you follow the exciting growth of a young dancer. Then we follow Frankie into the war years and his dropping out of the swing world for several decades. Fortunately in the 1980s, Frankie is coaxed out of retirement and continues to do this day to teach and inspire others about this wonderful dance. Throughout it all, you cannot help but be touched by Frankie's grace, style and humor in navigating tumultuous, often racially-charged situations. I want to be Frankie when I grow up. A great read for anyone interested in African-american history, dance, or jazz.

Certainly, every Lindy Hopper must read this book. But I think it's a beautiful and important book for people outside of the swing dance community too. Frankie Manning was an unsung hero. He and the other members of Whitey's Lindy Hoppers helped were instrumental in a dance that shaped and influenced our culture and our history.

Friends and family loved it.

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