DANCE

A Morale Booster during WWII

DANCE – A MORALE BOOSTER

Today's Program:

- A brief overview of the impact WWII had on Dance

- We will watch a video with snippets of classic folk dances from 27 counties.

  - Many of these are as old as the 16th century and most came back after the war.

- We will identify the class of dance during video.

  - You have handouts with description of each country's folk dance styles.

- We will take a few breaks during the video.

  - During the breaks, you will learn the steps and then dance to a few of these folk dances.

  - I will also demonstrate a couple of specific movements.

DANCE - IMPACT

- In the early 20th century, prior to the election of Hitler as chancellor in 1933, Germany built the roots for today's modern dance style. With the sensation of Ausdruckstanz, or Expression Dance, prolific choreographers such as Rudolf von Laban and Mary Wigman got their start and began setting a new standard for dance around the world.

- As with music, in September of 1933, dance fell under the rules of the Reichskulturkammer (Reich Chamber of Culture). This was to oversee that all the art being created in the new socialist state was conforming to Nazi beliefs and policies.

- The sub-chambers divided culture into seven different arenas: film, music, fine arts, theater, literature, press, and radio. Without a clear definition of where dance would fit in, it fell under the blanket of theater, where Goebbels was able to keep a watch on developments that made some choreographers and dancers fall out of favor with the government.

Mary Wigman expressionist style of German choreography that revolutionized dance at the turn of the 20th century, dismantling ballet's technical perfection and idealized stories.
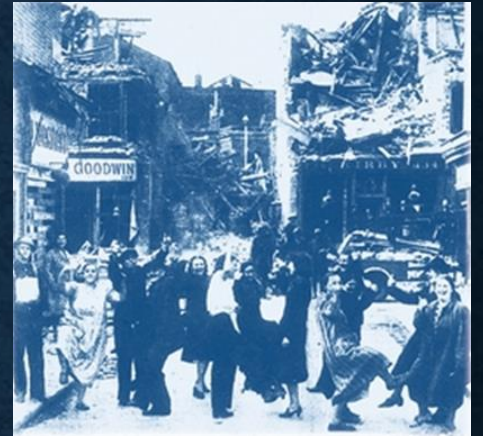

Wartime dancing at Blackpool Tower 1 November 1945

- With Hitler wanting a more structured style of dance like ballet, this placed modern dance in a bind—with its new prominence in German society, was it going to be allowed to survive or would it become a relic of degenerate art?

- Modern dance turned out to be the exception to this rule—as long as those in charge agreed with each work. This allowed Modern dance to exist but removed from it the central idea of emotional and human exploration by enforcing it to adhere to strict, anti-Semitic and Aryan propaganda guidelines.

- One dance form that was more regulated, in theory at least, was Jazz. This was because, like in Music, "Jazz was considered a danger to the core values of German society because it represented a culturally and racially foreign influence."

DANCE - REACTIONS

- European Folk-dance fell into a similar category. It was not German, it reflected other cultures, and thus it was frowned upon. It faded into the background along with their affiliated dance clothing styles. However, other forms of dance (swing, jitterbug & fox-trot), grew in popularity.

- Dance became a **Morale Booster** for citizens and soldiers, through its very nature of bringing people together. It was a way to escape the pressures of life under the constant threat of bombing and death.

- Dance during this time became highly influenced by the music of the western world, like big bands, rhythm and blues, earlier blues, the beat-heavy jump blues, boogie woogie, and up-tempo jazz.

- Dancers would swoop, swirl, dip and glide through the dances of the 1940s': doing the Foxtrot, waltz, tango, the shag, rumba, jitterbug, victory polka, and conga to popular dance tunes of "In the Mood", "Charmaine", and "Dancing in the Dark".

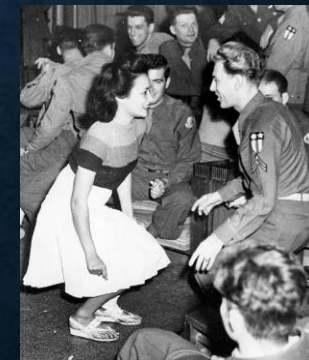- Dance halls sprang up everywhere and people danced in the streets.

"We Danced While They Bombed

Locals dance around a piano in Bow Way, London, during the blitz. 29th September 1940

"Officers and Their Dates Enjoy a Dance Given at the Officers' Club, 2nd Service Group, at an Air Base Somewhere in Iceland." 13 December 1943.

Swing was very popular in the dance halls.

FOLK DANCE DRESS

After World War II a revival of interest drew dancers back to the traditional squares, schottisches, and polkas.

Poland

Ireland

England

France

Russia

Scotland

Germany

Hungary

Austria

Italy

FOLK DANCE DRESS

Spain

Norway

Bulgaria

Switzerland

Finland

Netherlands

Ukraine

Denmark

Sweden

URomania

EUROPEAN FOLK DANCING

Austria
Belarus
England
Germany
Hungary
Ireland

Italy
Poland
Russia
Scotland
Spain
Sweden