



CARL GLASSMAN

She calls herself “nostalgia’s biggest sucker.” **Jane Goldberg** made it her mission to find out why tap had died. Then she helped bring it back to life.

TAPPING *into a* LOST ART

by **BARBARA ARIA**

“Put your hearts into it!”

Jane Goldberg is teaching a dozen NYU students the art of tap dancing. And for her, that’s a lot more than teaching steps. Her job, as she sees it, is to convey a sensibility, to pass on a dance subculture that was dangerously near extinction when she discovered it some 20 years ago.

Back then, tap was considered a corny has-been.

So tonight, Goldberg is teaching her students “the real thing”; not show tap, not Broadway tap, but the art of treating the body as a musical instrument that makes rhythm. It’s an art she herself learned directly from the legendary “old hoofers” themselves.

“Since I got the steps right from the people who made them up, I’m in a unique position to teach them,” she says. “I feel like steps are great recipes. You pass them down because you want to keep them in

the family, or in the tradition.”

As the students go through their routine one more time, the room almost shakes with the sound of feet “laying down the irons.”

“This floor leaves a lot to be desired,” says Goldberg. “But at least we’re not out on the street.” This is an aural art as much as a visual one, she explains — and that’s its magic.

As the class is discovering, finding a place to practice where the floor has a good tone and the neigh-

bors won’t complain is just one of the problems a tap dancer faces. Goldberg herself has had nowhere to run through her steps since the Marxist School left Leonard Street — except her balcony at IPN, with its specially-built tap floor. “But it’s too cold in the winter,” says Goldberg. Instead of using a practice space, she carries her shoes with her always. “I’ve got used to dancing wherever I happen to be.”

Tonight the class is using the auditorium at P.S. 3 in the Village.



TOM KARAVAGLIA

(Above) Jane Goldberg in a recent rehearsal with NYU tap students and (below) with cast members of “Sole Sisters,” a show performed at La Mama in 1986.